IMPLEMENTING A BILINGUAL PROGRAM

Prepared for the Association of Independent Schools of Victoria by Andrea Truckenbrodt and Michèle de Courcy
ISBN: 0-9579041-6-9

Published by the Association of Independent Schools of Victoria Inc.
20 Garden Street, South Yarra, Victoria 3141
PO Box 2138 Prahran, Victoria 3181
Telephone: (03) 9825 7200
Facsimile: (03) 9826 6066
Email: aisv@ais.vic.edu.au

This book has been produced by the Association of Independent Schools of Victoria with funds provided by the Commonwealth Government through the Languages Other Than English (LOTE) Element.

© Copyright Commonwealth of Australia 2002

This book is Commonwealth Copyright.
It may be reproduced in whole or in part for study or training purposes, subject to the inclusion of an acknowledgement of the source and that it is not for commercial use or for sale. Reproduction for purposes other than those indicated requires the written permission of the Department of Education, Science and Training. Requests and enquiries concerning reproduction and copyright should be addressed to the Assistant Secretary, Schools Division, Department of Education, Science and Training, GPO Box 9880, Canberra City, ACT 2601.

Disclaimer: The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training.
Implementing a Bilingual Program

Andrea Truckenbrodt
and
Michèle de Courcy
Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the AISV and Judy Oakes in particular for commissioning this booklet and for their patience during its lengthy ‘gestation’.

We acknowledge the contributions of the teachers and principals of the various bilingual schools with which we have been associated. They have enriched the final product immensely.

We are grateful to David Vale, Editor of Babel, for his kind permission to reproduce the cartoon on page 17, and to Brett Willis for his cartoon on page 10.

Finally we acknowledge and thank our families for their encouragement and support without which this project would not have been possible.

Andrea Truckenbrodt
and Michèle de Courcy
Table of contents

ABBREVIATIONS ........................................................................................................ 2

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION
  1.0 Preamble ........................................................................................................ 3
  1.1 Background .................................................................................................... 3
  1.2 The purpose of the booklet ........................................................................... 4
  1.3 Key definitions .............................................................................................. 5
  1.4 Why get involved in bilingual education? ................................................. 8
  1.5 The structure of the booklet ........................................................................ 11

CHAPTER 2: BILINGUAL EDUCATION
  2.0 Introduction ................................................................................................... 14
  2.1 Aims, models and outcomes of bilingual education ................................. 14
    2.1.1 Aims ....................................................................................................... 14
    2.1.2 Models .................................................................................................. 17
    2.1.3 Immersion language programs ......................................................... 17
    2.1.4 Mother tongue maintenance programs ....................................... 20
    2.1.5 Outcomes ............................................................................................ 21
  2.2 The Australian experience of bilingual education .................................... 24
  2.3 Bilingual education abroad ........................................................................... 28

CHAPTER 3: PLANNING FOR A BILINGUAL PROGRAM
  3.0 Introduction ................................................................................................... 32
  3.1 Which language should we choose? ............................................................. 33
    3.1.1 Schools without links ........................................................................... 33
    3.1.2 Language distance ................................................................................. 36
    3.1.3 Schools with links .................................................................................. 36
  3.2 When should we begin the bilingual program? .......................................... 37
    3.2.1 A primary bilingual program ................................................................ 37
    3.2.2 A secondary bilingual program ......................................................... 40
  3.3 The time factor ............................................................................................... 42
Chapter 1

Introduction
Abbreviations

LOTE  Languages Other Than English
L1    First language, mother tongue
L2    Second language, often used synonymously with foreign language
L3    Third language
SOSE  Studies of Society and the Environment
VCE   Victorian Certificate of Education
1.0 Preamble

In the 1990s one of the authors, Dr Michèle de Courcy, was undertaking some research on a bilingual program in an Australian secondary school in Queensland. Part of her research involved interviewing students. A Year 10 student who was involved in the French late immersion program made the following astute comment:

*I think that people just need to know to do a little bit of extra work, like just learning the vocabulary after school. They should have a book that tells them what they’re going to be doing over the next three years, and how it’s done, and then they could have like an editor’s note at the front to say that you’ve got to be ready for it; it’s not going to be easy; it’s a real culture shock (but) just encourage people to do it!*

We agreed wholeheartedly, and so, Andrew, here at last is your book.

1.1 Background

In recent years the importance of bilingual education has come to be widely recognised by policy makers, schools and the broader community. In 1998, the Association of Independent Schools of Victoria planned and implemented a program of professional development focussing on bilingual education. The program had a number of aims: firstly, to inform decision-makers such as principals and curriculum coordinators within schools of the potential of bilingual education; secondly to train language teachers in the delivery of content-based language teaching and to facilitate the development of appropriate support materials; and finally, to provide various forms of support for those schools which implemented a bilingual/partial immersion language program. This booklet is an example of such support.
1.2 Purpose of the booklet

This booklet is potentially useful for a number of groups within the school community. It is primarily intended as an accessible reference for teaching professionals who may not necessarily have a background in language teaching. However, for language teachers who have not been involved in bilingual/partial immersion programs, this booklet may serve as a suitable introductory text. Interested parents who wish to inform themselves more thoroughly about various issues associated with bilingual education may also find this booklet relevant.

This booklet aims to:

• introduce the concept of bilingual education;
• provide an explanation of the terminology associated with bilingual education;
• identify the characteristic features of various forms of bilingual education;
• provide an insight into the historical, social and political contexts of bilingual education both locally and internationally;
• give an appreciation of bilingual/immersion programs as a model for second language learning;
• provide an understanding of the potential outcomes of the different second/foreign language programs;
• present the issues associated with the successful planning and implementation of a bilingual program;
• provide a limited list of further resources related to bilingual education.

Apart from providing the reader with a significant amount of information, we have tried to give you a feel for how a bilingual program works and how it affects the people involved by using quotes arising from our involvement in a number of Australian bilingual programs. The names of the people referred to in the booklet have been changed to protect their privacy.
1.3 Key definitions

Since the 1980s the learning of languages other than English (LOTE) has increasingly become an integral part of the school curriculum in both primary and secondary schools. The term ‘bilingual education’ is used in a number of potentially confusing ways. It is therefore pertinent to begin by explaining some of the relevant terminology associated with bilingual education. Key terms are italicised in the text where they are associated with a definition.

In its simplest form, bilingual education is an umbrella term which refers to education in two languages. Therefore any school offering a LOTE or second language program might be thought to offer a form of bilingual education. However, this is not the general understanding of the term. In the Australian context, a ‘bilingual program’ is a specific type of language program that involves teaching and learning material from other areas of the curriculum such as social studies or maths via the medium of a second language. Thus it is important to be able to distinguish between the three main types of language programs offered in Australian schools. They are:

1) Language/cultural awareness programs;
2) Language arts programs;
3) Content-based language programs.

Although these language programs share the common goal of providing learners with knowledge about a second language and culture (or cultures), they differ in two main ways; namely, the time devoted to language study and the subject matter studied.

The amount of time allocated to language or cultural awareness programs is minimal, usually no more than one or two lessons per week and not more than 60 minutes in total teaching time. The language content covered in language or cultural awareness programs is limited, often restricted to vocabulary topics such as numbers and colours and some limited language functions like greetings.
These programs are usually taught in English and the focus is on the culture of the target language groups including such topics as customs and festivals, music and dance and food.

The typical *language arts program* comprises two or three lessons per week amounting to between one and two hours of language teaching. Some language arts programs involve more lessons per week and up to three hours of language classes. Language arts programs are sometimes referred to as language-as-object programs because the focus of the teaching is on learning to communicate in the target language as well as learning about the language itself and the cultural groups who use it.

*Content-based language programs* involve the greatest time commitment, usually more than five hours of teaching time per week. The issue of time commitment is a particularly significant one because it has implications for potential learning outcomes and for the school curriculum and organisation. This issue will be discussed further in section 3.3. The content referred to in the term ‘content-based language teaching’ comes from other areas of the curriculum such as science, geography or art. In content-based language programs both the learning of the subject matter and the second language are important, though the relative importance of the two aspects varies across programs.

The use of the term ‘immersion’ in association with various language programs adds a further dimension to the terminological confusion. We often speak of being immersed in the language and culture when visiting or living in the country where the target language is spoken. In this sense, ‘immersion’ refers to having maximum exposure to the target language and minimal access to one’s first language.

Teaching professionals sometimes use the term ‘immersion’ to refer to the classroom practice of only using the target language when interacting with students. The target language only environment thereby created by the teacher is partially intended to create a learning environment as similar as possible to actually being in the country where the language is spoken.
Linguists, however, tend to use the term ‘immersion’ only to refer to language programs involving content-based teaching. The amount of the school curriculum taught in the second or foreign language is a crucial issue in the use of the term ‘immersion program’.

Full immersion programs occur where all of the curriculum is taught in the second language except for a first language subject like English. The use of the term partial immersion program is contentious. For some linguists and educationalists (e.g. Genesee, 1983; Berthold, 1995), a partial immersion program must involve at least 50 per cent of the total curriculum. In Australia, it is not common to find immersion programs involving such a large time commitment unless the students participating in the program have a background in the language. In Victoria, a partial immersion language program would involve teaching a number of subjects in the target language, generally three or more, for at least five hours in total per week. The current view of the Victorian Department of Education and Training is that partial immersion programs must have a time allocation of seven and a half hours which includes both content subjects and a LOTE or language arts component.

As a final point, in Victoria, the terms ‘bilingual program’ and ‘immersion program’ are often used interchangeably or concurrently as in ‘a bilingual immersion program’. This practice has been continued in this booklet, where the term ‘bilingual program’ refers to a partial immersion language program.
1.4 Why get involved in bilingual education?

As academics and teaching professionals, we would argue that there are four main reasons for offering a bilingual program. The first and most important reason is that it represents an opportunity to be involved in educational excellence. Immersion programs provide the best opportunity for students to learn another language in a country where the language is not normally used by the broader community. This view is reflected in one of the recommendations of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Languages Other Than English (MACLOTE) Report (1994) which advocated that ‘... content-based/immersion programs be promoted as the best models (our emphasis) for achieving high levels of communicative competence in LOTE’. As will be explained further in Chapter 2, the first language of students involved in the best quality immersion programs does not suffer and in fact, there is evidence that bilingual students perform better academically than their non-bilingual peers (e.g. Johnson and Swain, 1997). This appears to be true for both students’ study of their first language, e.g. English, and the content-based subjects.

Comments by non-LOTE teachers associated with a secondary German/English bilingual program give additional insight into the impact of the program on the school. Robert Green wrote that his school’s program has ‘given the school an image of a positive academic institute’, mirroring his colleague’s comment that ‘a different ethos (has been allowed) to develop’. The science coordinator of this school wrote:

*It has provided an alternative for those who are drawn to languages and possibly has enhanced their interest in subjects such as Science, in which previously they may have lacked enthusiasm.*

Even students in Year 8 were able to describe the academic benefits of being involved in the immersion program. According to Penny, she participated in the bilingual program:

*to learn German better, and speak it better. To give myself a challenge.*
Matthew showed some remarkable insights in his comments on the benefits of a bilingual education. He identified them as:

1) **enhanced development of communication skills, study skills, appreciation and understanding of cultural diversity**;

2) **special accreditation at the end of the course**.

The parents of students involved in this program were also surveyed. One parent’s response showed the range of reasons nominated by the cohort of parents for why they wanted their child involved in the immersion program. Mrs Simmons wrote:

>The importance of learning a second language, and another culture. It will give confidence to the child, widens their horizon, makes them want to travel, meet readily with ‘different’ people. Maybe more job opportunities. Bilingual classes will improve their speed of learning and make them more confident.

It is our view, and one that we feel is reflected in the comments of the representatives of the different groups involved in an immersion program, that bilingual education has the potential to be a rich, rewarding and worthwhile learning experience.

Principals, in particular, nominate the second reason for involvement in immersion education. A bilingual program raises the profile of the school both locally and within the broader community; further, it gives the school a distinctive characteristic feature, that sets it apart clearly from other schools in the area. A number of Victorian schools have also reported an increase in student numbers as a result of their bilingual programs and mention that overseas families have chosen to live in their areas specifically so that their children can attend the school. Because immersion programs are still relatively uncommon in Australia, they also attract the attention of members of the educational community, other teachers, students and researchers.
The third main reason for offering an immersion program is related to the second reason. It enhances links with the international community, particularly with other schools and researchers involved in bilingual education but also with the country or countries in which the target language is spoken. It is common for bilingual schools to be visited by officials, teachers and researchers from the target country. Sister school relationships, in-country visits and student/teacher exchanges are typical features of bilingual programs as they are of good LOTE programs. However, reports from bilingual schools (e.g. Berthold, 1995) suggest that the quality of involvement is greatly enhanced with the increased proficiency and motivation of the students.

The final reason for giving bilingual education a go is that it is challenging. It is a novel, stimulating experience for students where they will be required to use all of their cognitive skills and develop new learning skills in order to cope with learning
through an unfamiliar language. They have the opportunity to become resilient, confident and independent learners. They will gain insights into the experience of being in a foreign environment where they cannot understand what is expected of them, where they struggle to make themselves understood and where they sometimes make embarrassing mistakes. Students will also become effective consumers and producers of a second language.

For language teachers, the immersion experience is reportedly tiring but ultimately rewarding. The teachers comment that students make enormous progress even within one year, that they enjoy the special rapport that they develop with their immersion classes and that they have no opportunity to stagnate professionally. Immersion teachers are constantly required to think up innovative and creative ways of doing their job.

1.5 The structure of the booklet

The second chapter of this booklet examines the different forms of bilingual education, their aims and outcomes with an emphasis on immersion education. The chapter also focuses on the historical, social and political contexts of bilingual education, in both Australia and overseas.

Chapters 3 and 4 are aimed at education professionals and are very practical in nature. They address the issues associated with planning and implementing a bilingual program and should provide assistance for schools contemplating the introduction of a bilingual program or intending to implement one.

The reference section provides the reader with a list of journals, monographs, web-based information sources and other contacts relevant to bilingual education. The texts are of theoretical, research and practical interest.
2.0 Introduction

The main purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with sufficient background knowledge of bilingual education in order to access the literature devoted to the field and also to participate meaningfully in a discussion about a proposed bilingual program. It should be noted however, that given the extraordinary breadth and depth of material devoted to bilingual education, it is only possible to provide a cursory overview of the field within a single chapter of a booklet. Important issues associated with bilingual education can only be flagged here. The reader will need to read more widely in order to gain a truer understanding and appreciation of these aspects of bilingual education. The reference section of this booklet is a useful starting point in the search for further information.

2.1 Aims, models and outcomes of bilingual education

As stated in Chapter 1, the term ‘bilingual education’ is generally understood to mean education in two languages, specifically teaching and learning through the medium of two languages. It functions as an umbrella term to cover a variety of different types or models of bilingual programs. The fact that there are different realisations of bilingual education which have a variety of outcomes for the learners can be traced back to the differing aims of the programs. Thus the aims, outcomes and models of bilingual education are inextricably linked.

2.1.1 Aims

The aims of different language programs must be considered from both societal and linguistic perspectives. From a societal perspective, Ferguson, Houghton and Wells (1977 quoted in Baker 2001: 193) identify ten possible aims for bilingual education. Table 2.1 lists these aims and gives examples of countries which have adopted bilingual education principally to achieve these aims. It must be pointed out that bilingual education is rarely introduced to achieve a single aim and therefore more than one aim may apply to any given example. Further, some aims are overtly stated, whereas other aims, such as number eight, are rarely acknowledged openly.
### TABLE 2.1 Aims of bilingual education with examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To assimilate individuals or groups into the mainstream of society; to socialise people for full participation in the broader community.</td>
<td>Spanish speakers in the US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To unify a multilingual society; to bring unity to a multi-ethnic, multi-tribal, or multi-national linguistically diverse state.</td>
<td>Chinese, Malays and Indians in Singapore who are educated in English as well as their ‘mother tongue’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To enable people to communicate with the outside world.</td>
<td>English and German in the Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To provide language skills which are marketable, aiding employment and status.</td>
<td>English as a foreign language in Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To preserve ethnic and/or religious identity.</td>
<td>Maori in NZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. To reconcile and mediate between different linguistic and political communities.</td>
<td>French in Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. To spread the use of a colonising language, socialising an entire population to a colonial existence.</td>
<td>English in East African former colonies like Botswana, Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. To strengthen elite groups and preserve their position in society.</td>
<td>Upper class Europeans in the 19th century were educated in French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. To give equal status in law to languages of unequal status in daily life.</td>
<td>Welsh in Wales; Xhosa in South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. To deepen understanding of language and culture.</td>
<td>Study of any foreign or classical language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Clearly the different language situations implied by the various aims will have a significant impact on the form bilingual education will take (e.g. compulsory or optional second language learning) and on the motivation of learners and teachers participating in a given language program. The linguistic outcomes (e.g. level of proficiency) are also likely to be influenced by these factors.

Baker (1993, 2001) concentrates on the linguistic aims, and claims that there are strong and weak forms of bilingual education. Strong forms of bilingual education are characterised by their aims of bilingualism, biliteracy and presumably biculturalism. The benefits to learners of such bilingual education are that they gain additional skills and that both languages and cultures are valued.

The Canadian immersion situation best typifies the strong form of bilingual education. English speaking children gain a large part of their education via the medium of French. In such programs, there is no intention to replace English with French and both languages are high status languages within Canada and internationally.

According to Baker (2001: 194), weak forms of bilingual education have monolingualism or ‘limited bilingualism’ as language outcomes, where the second language and possibly culture replaces or sublimates the first language and culture.

The situation for migrant children in the 1960s in Australia might be characterised as ‘submersion’, a weak form of bilingual education. Non-English speaking children were placed in mainstream classrooms without any form of language support and were expected to learn English as fast as possible. Parents were encouraged to speak only English to their children to aid the process, and adherence to this advice undermined the children’s chances of maintaining their first language skills. Monolingualism and assimilation were the preferred outcomes of such education, but the result in some cases was what Skutnabb-Kangas (see Baker 1993 or 2001) refers to as ‘subtractive bilingualism’, where neither language is fully mastered.
2.1.2 Models of bilingual education

There are a number of different models of bilingual education. Baker (2001:193) lists ten different types. This section will concentrate on two strong forms of bilingual education, immersion and language maintenance programs.

2.1.3 Immersion language programs

Immersion language programs are characterised by two key features. They are the amount of classroom time in which the curriculum is delivered in the learners’ second language and the point at which the immersion program begins in a student’s education.

An immersion program can be realised as either full or partial immersion. In *full* or *total immersion* programs, all of the curriculum is delivered via the medium of the second language. In reality, full immersion generally applies to only the first two or three years of a student’s schooling. At some stage, study of the students’ first language is included and some additional subjects are also taught via the medium of the first language.

For some researchers (e.g. Genesee, 1987) and educationalists (e.g. Berthold, 1995), the term *partial immersion* can only be used in situations where at least 50 per cent of curriculum is delivered through the medium of the second language.

In Australia, some bilingual programs involving the teaching of content areas via the medium of a language other than English are termed ‘partial immersion’ programs.
Immersion programs are also characterised as early, middle or late immersion. The adjectives refer to the point in time when the immersion program is started. An early immersion program begins in the first year of schooling. Middle immersion begins during the latter half of primary schooling and late immersion refers to programs beginning at secondary school. Late, late immersion is the designation for university-based immersion programs.

Figure 2.1 is a graphic representation of the typical organisation of an early, full immersion program, adapted from Genesee (1983:5). This is the pattern of schooling followed by the majority of children in immersion in Canada.

FIGURE 2.1 The distribution of time in a full immersion program

Because there is such diversity in the realisation of immersion programs, Johnson and Swain (1997) have identified eight core features of immersion programs and ten variable features of immersion programs. They are summarised in Table 2.2.
TABLE 2.2  Core and variable features of immersion programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Features</th>
<th>Variable Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L2 is the medium of instruction</td>
<td>Level within the educational system at which immersion is introduced, i.e. early, mid or late</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immersion curriculum parallels the L1 curriculum</td>
<td>The ratio of L1 to L2 at different stages within the immersion program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are bilingual</td>
<td>Extent of immersion, i.e. partial or full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overt support exists for the L1</td>
<td>Status of the L2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program aims for additive bilingualism</td>
<td>Continuity across levels within education systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students enter with similar (and limited) levels of proficiency</td>
<td>Amount of bridging support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to the L2 is largely confined to the classroom</td>
<td>Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom culture is that of the L1</td>
<td>Attitudes toward the culture of the target community language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Measures of success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commitment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The features identified in this table are useful to distinguish between immersion and submersion language programs, both of which may be classified as bilingual education. The core features can be viewed as essential criteria against which a given program might be assessed; that is, for a given language program to qualify as an immersion program, it must demonstrate each of the core variables. This is a theoretical position.
In practice, a more flexible approach is taken. For example, in the Australian context, students with a home background in the second language, may be part of a partial immersion program, working with students whose first language is English. The home background learners may have exposure to the L2 outside the classroom and their level of language proficiency may be quite high.

The variable features are different for any given context. Taking language status as an example, particular languages are valued differently by different societies and the value attached to a given language may change over time. In the past, French, Latin and German were considered the important teaching languages in Australia, whereas today there is a commitment to teach languages of particular cultural, regional and community significance. Thus language programs in Italian, Indonesian and Auslan are among the languages offered in Australian schools.

### 2.1.4 Mother tongue maintenance programs

In the Australian context, mother tongue maintenance programs are targeted at learners who have a background in a language other than English. Such learners might be migrants or children who use a language other than English at home. In its most positive form, a mother tongue maintenance program is designed to support and foster learners’ language development in that language. The way this happens is that children have the opportunity to use their knowledge and skills in their first or home language in a high status institution, namely the school. They also develop their proficiency in the language further through involvement in the different situations and contexts provided by the various subject areas such as science and social studies.

However, we need to keep in mind John Edwards’ caution that language programs for the maintenance of minority group identity will only succeed if society and the community itself support them. Language reinforces identity if the community believes it is important. The language program must go together with other things.
2.1.5 Outcomes

Offering a strong form of bilingual education such as an immersion language program is a large undertaking that has implications for the entire school community. Therefore, a key question is what are the potential benefits and possible outcomes of such a program. Given the importance of the answer to this question, a number of qualifications need to be outlined beforehand.

Firstly, much of the research used to support claims of the benefits of immersion education comes from case studies of individual classes, teachers and schools. Evidence derived from a true experimental research design which incorporates randomly assigned control and experimental groups (i.e. school classes), who receive carefully specified ‘treatments’ (teaching), are virtually non-existent at a program level. Practical and ethical constraints prevent such research being undertaken. Thus it is possible that some of the claims made in relation to bilingual education apply only to one specific context and cannot be transferred to another context, that is, they rely on context specific evidence. The response to this argument is that the large number of research studies undertaken in many different settings and countries with similar findings adds to the credibility of the evidence they provide. Further, if enough details of context are included, the transferability of results may be possible.

A second important factor is the actual delivery of the program. The strongest and clearest benefits have been documented with early full immersion programs in the specific linguistic context of Canada. As soon as the immersion program is modified in any significant way, such as amount of teaching time in the target language or the age of the learners, the potential benefits may not necessarily be realised to the same extent.

Finally, we as authors, acknowledge an obvious bias in favour of immersion education which has resulted in an emphasis on the positive benefits and outcomes.
We propose to outline many of the potential benefits and possible outcomes of immersion education but without giving the impression that the benefits and outcomes are guaranteed. In Table 2.3 below we summarise some of the potential positive and negative effects of the inclusion of a bilingual program in your school, based on our experience of conducting research in and evaluations of many bilingual programs in Australia. The outcomes described here reflect the perspective of the particular stakeholders.

**TABLE 2.3 The Australian experience of bilingual education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Possible positive outcomes</th>
<th>Possible negative outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Students     | • ‘Learning to think in more than one way’ *(Yr 9 student)*  
  • ‘It opens their mind to a different way of thinking, to a new culture and gets them fluent in the language by grade 6’ *(primary teacher)*  
  • students report finding Yr 11 & 12 easier than their monolingual peers, because they have learnt how to study  
  • forming a close bond with other students  
  • forming a close bond with the immersion teachers  
  • cross gender socialisation  
  • all the benefits of bilingualism *(towards the end of the program)*  
  • ‘I think I’d be doing worse (if it was in English) because it gets boring!’ *(Yr 9 student)* | • ‘You’ve got to concentrate and listen more than if it was in English’ *(Yr 8 student)*  
  • ‘They call you ‘Frenchies’ and ‘nerds’ … but your real friends don’t mind’ *(Yr 9 students)*  
  • ‘A lot of the teachers expected more of us, in English’ *(Yr 11 immersion graduate)*  
  • ‘If you get too many *(high achievers)* in there it can get too competitive’ *(Yr 11 immersion graduate)* |
## Stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Possible positive outcomes</th>
<th>Possible negative outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Families     | • possible revival of use of a heritage language  
• children can now converse with grandparents | • some frustration at inability to monitor or help with homework to the same degree as in English |
| Immersion teachers | • ‘Teamwork. Using French. Watching students develop their use of French.’  
• ‘The daily joy of communicating with students in a second language. The dynamic atmosphere.’ | • ‘Demanding, and often too challenging.’  
• ‘Having to translate all the work for the children for the integrated unit.’  
• ‘Lack of understanding of the stress the French teachers are under.’ |
| Non-bilingual teachers | • ‘The challenge of the bilingual setting. The multiculturalism of the staff.’  
• ‘I enjoy working in the bilingual setting. It’s an added interest and challenge.’  
• ‘More diversity due to French Program’ | • ‘Seeing others (colleagues) feel stressed.’  
• ‘Trying to focus on 66 kids (entire grade) rather than 22 (class size).’  
• ‘Not being in an ‘open classroom’ with my French partner.’ |
| School       | • increased profile in the community  
• additional students with a LOTE background | • may need to change the appointments policy to reflect need for teachers with the LOTE |
2.2 The Australian experience of bilingual education

Bilingual education is not a new phenomenon in Australia. Prior to white settlement, bilingualism and multilingualism were the norm and children received their education through the different languages of their elders, parents and other relatives as well as other members of the community. In many Aboriginal communities, exogamy (marriage outside one’s language group) was required and one of the first tasks of a young wife was to learn the language of her husband’s community.

There is evidence of bilingual schools operating in the nineteenth century at primary and secondary level in all states except Tasmania and Western Australia (Clyne 1988). The main languages were German, French or Gaelic with English. The division of languages occurred most commonly on the basis of different subjects or subject matter, e.g. British history in English, Reformation history in German. Alternatively, the time of day dictated the choice of language – e.g. French in the morning, English in the afternoon. According to Clyne (1988: 95), ‘education acts led to a decline in bilingual education except in elitist girls or rural primary schools and wartime legislation early in the twentieth century virtually stopped bilingual education until the 1980s’.

The catalyst for bilingual education for mainstream students began in 1981 in two Victorian primary schools, Bayswater West and Bayswater South Primary Schools, where students were taught various subjects in German for between 3 and 5 hours per week (Clyne 1986; Fernandez 1992). The success of the programs resulted in the introduction of other content-based language programs in a variety of languages across Australia. For example, a French-Australian bi-national school started in 1984 in Telopea Park, a suburb of Canberra. This is a slightly different model from the other programs discussed in this booklet, as it teaches the French curriculum, rather than the local curriculum in its French/English Immersion Program.

At the secondary school level, the first immersion program started in 1985, at Benowa High School in Queensland. It is a French immersion program, and served as a model for the other programs which were later set up in Queensland. In 1990, a Hebrew immersion program commenced at Mt Scopus, a private secondary school in Melbourne.
Recently, there has been an increased interest in immersion programs, but this interest is concentrated in two states – Queensland and Victoria. In Queensland, one mainly finds secondary school immersion programs (with one, in German, at the primary level), whereas in Victoria, one finds mostly primary school immersion programs, with a few at the secondary school level. The programs are fairly evenly spread among independent schools, Catholic schools, and state schools.

The most recent details we have been able to obtain on the programs across the whole country are as shown in the table below. P is for primary school programs, and S for secondary. (I) indicates those programs in Independent schools:

### TABLE 2.4  Bilingual programs offered in Australian schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Vic</th>
<th>Q’land</th>
<th>S.A.</th>
<th>W.A.</th>
<th>N.T.</th>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>NSW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1(I)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3(I)</td>
<td>4(2I)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td>1(I)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab L1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese L1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese L2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese L2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese L1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auslan L1 &amp; L2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slavic L1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian L2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1(I)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In some schools, such as Camberwell Primary School in Victoria, the program is compulsory for every child in the school, but for the most part, they are voluntary programs involving only one class in the school, and selected either by the children, or by their parents.

Researchers have completed evaluations of several of the programs, and we have listed the principal authors in the bibliography. In our experience, parents always want to know:

- if the children’s English suffers in this type of program;
- if their knowledge of the content will suffer (especially if Mathematics is one of the subjects taught via the second language); and
- if the children will become proficient in the language used as the means of instruction.

Similarly to the earlier Canadian investigations of these questions, positive outcomes relating to all the above have been found for the Australian programs. Here we will outline some of the results obtained from research into Australian immersion programs.

Research into late immersion programs has been conducted by Michael Berthold (1995) and Michèle de Courcy. Berthold’s earliest research found that the immersion students did as well as or better than the non-immersion students in Maths and English. His later research involved a survey of the students, which indicated that they took on the program and stayed in it for the intellectual challenge and academic benefits of being part of a group of motivated students. Most students were pleased with the program and would recommend it to others.

Michèle de Courcy (1991) conducted research into attitudes of students at Benowa High School in order to inform those schools setting up other immersion programs. The findings of this study indicated that the students found the program positive in terms of group cohesion, mixed gender socialisation, close bonds with teachers, collaborative learning, improved concentration, learning to think in more than one way, learning to study, and the challenge – the program was not boring. The negative aspects were the competitiveness of some fellow students and being marked as different from other students in the school (de Courcy, 2002: 16-17).
De Courcy’s later work (1993, 2002) was with students in French late immersion classes and a Chinese late, late immersion class, and the research explored the learning processes, experiences and strategies involved in participation in these two programs. Some of the themes explored are the stages students go through when they are learning to make sense of input in a new language, their reading and writing strategies, and their learning strategies. There are new findings relating to private speech and in-head translation and their relationship to the language learning process in immersion programs.

In *An Early Start*, the study conducted in the German partial immersion programs in Bayswater, Michael Clyne and his research team explored such issues as the development of the student’s ability in German, the effect of the program on the student’s first language skills and cognitive abilities, and the student’s reactions to the program. Positive results were found in all areas. Sue Fernandez (1992) provides an historical perspective on later changes and developments in this program, and includes case studies of three families involved in the program.

The French bilingual program at Camberwell Primary School in Melbourne has been the subject of intensive research since 1995 by a team originally located at the University of Melbourne (Monique Burston, Michèle de Courcy and Jane Warren, 2002, 2000, 1999). They explored parents’ and teachers’ attitudes to the program, students’ achievements in Mathematics (the principal subject matter studied through French), the development of the student’s French language and classroom activity and strategies. Their most recent work dealt with students from diverse backgrounds and with a range of abilities, and how well they did in the program. They found that all students in an immersion program can achieve as well as or better than they would in a monolingual class.

Recently in Victoria, a significant commitment of funds and time has been directed to bilingual immersion programs in government schools in the state. Twelve schools have received support as part of the Bilingual Schools Project.
Each program has undergone internal and external evaluation since the project started in 1997. Some of the schools involved in the project had already existing immersion programs; others set up new programs as part of the initiative.

As noted in Table 2.4, there are also bilingual programs operating in Aboriginal languages, mainly in the Northern Territory and Western Australia. We are unwilling to go into great detail about these programs in this booklet, as recent changes in the Northern Territory government’s support for bilingual programs has meant that the whole situation is in a state of flux at the time of writing. Consequently, anything we write now would be very quickly out of date. Brian Devlin’s chapter in the Bilingual Interface Project (McKay et al, 1997) gives very good details of and background to the programs that were in existence in 1997.

2.3 Bilingual education abroad

Bilingual education is a widespread phenomenon, and is, in fact, the norm rather than the exception in the world. Most children in Australia start school using the language they have been using at home. Their peers in many other countries would consider them lucky. For example, in Italy, Indonesia or China, children grow up at home speaking one of the many dialects found in those countries. Then, when they go to school, they are educated in the standard language - either Italian, Bahasa Indonesia, or Modern Standard Chinese. Sometimes the standard dialect is quite close to what children speak at home, but more often than not there is a different vocabulary and even syntax to be acquired.

In still other countries, the language of the school is the language of a former (or current) colonial power, which is a completely different language system to the one children have acquired at home. An example would be Nigerian children being taught in English or Kanak children in New Caledonia being taught in French.
In this section we will give some brief details of the programs running in other countries, to which we alluded in Table 2.1.

In the United States, the dominant second language is Spanish, and there are programs operating all over the country which provide education for children in two languages. One of the most interesting types of bilingual education program is called a ‘two way immersion’ program. Most of these programs involve Spanish, but there are some in Native American languages. In such a program, approximately equal numbers of, Spanish L1 speakers and English L1 speakers make up a class. These programs are either 50/50, where for about half the day the children are taught in Spanish, and the other half in English, or else 90/10. The 90/10 program starts off like a full immersion program in Spanish, with English being gradually introduced. An important rule with such an approach is that the same content must not be delivered twice, in different languages, or the children will tune out when it is being delivered in their second language, and thus not learn the second language (Lindholm-Leary, 2001).

The Centre for Applied Linguistics in the United States has conducted much research into these programs and their findings support the general observation that two-way immersion programs have positive effects on the language development of the students enrolled in them. This type of program can also be found in the Ladin valleys of northern Italy, where children are educated in both Italian and German.

Another type of bilingual education prevalent in the United States (and found in some Aboriginal schools in Australia) is the transitional bilingual program. In such a program, all the children learn English as a second language. Their education starts off almost completely in their first language, with English being introduced in increasing proportions as they progress through school. This model of bilingual education, while delivering good results in English language development, does not have such good results for language maintenance as the two way immersion model. It also does not have the benefit of having the speakers of the dominant language learning the language of the minority, and thus validating that language.
Still other countries use a model of bilingual education where the language that is used for instruction in school is not the native language of any community in that country. An example is the country of Botswana, in southern Africa, where the majority language is Setswana, but teaching in secondary schools and in some primary schools is conducted in English. Students and teachers have reported struggling with this system, and some teachers are exploring either better ways to teach in the second language, or else ways of convincing those in authority to change the language of instruction (Arthur, 1997). Similar situations exist in many former British colonies or Protectorates like the Maldives, Kenya and Nigeria.

In other countries like Wales, New Zealand and the Basque and Catalan areas of Spain, we see exciting developments in the use of the languages of minority groups as the medium of instruction in schools. These have resulted in language revival on the part of many parents, children being able to talk with their grandparents in the L1 of the elders, and an increase in regional pride. Many, but not all, of the students in such programs have a heritage in the language of instruction. Many of these programs are discussed in Colin Baker’s books (1993, 2001), and in Christian and Genesee (2001).

Yet another model of bilingual education found abroad, is the European Schools model. These schools were established in 1957 for the children of European Union officials, and are found across the European Union. In these schools, the children receive their initial education in their mother tongue, and then, in primary school, they start learning English and one other of the official languages of the European Union. In secondary school, instruction via the medium of the second and third language is introduced. Very high levels of bilingualism are achieved in these settings, but are not always a given, due to variations in sociolinguistic factors (Baetens-Beardsmore, 1993; Housen, 2002; Housen and Baetens-Beardsmore 1987). Housen stresses that even in these optimal settings, the attainment of bilingualism is a long and continuous process.
Planning for a Bilingual Program
3.0 Introduction

It should be clear from the previous chapters that a bilingual program is a significant undertaking for any school with wide-ranging implications for the entire school community. As a consequence, careful planning is an essential part in the development of a school’s bilingual program. It is our view that the ultimate success of a bilingual program rests with the quality of planning that precedes its implementation. It is possible that after consideration of the planning issues to be discussed in this chapter, a school may decide not to continue with the implementation of the proposed bilingual program and this must surely be preferable to a program that fails to deliver the expected outcomes.

Any new initiative will encounter ‘teething problems’ that could not have been predicted, but it makes sense to learn from the experiences of other schools and to consider the issues that arose in their programs. From a parental perspective, committing one’s child to a bilingual program involves a certain amount of risk and it is important that schools deal confidently and competently with the concerns of both the parents and their children. A sense of confidence and competence in relation to bilingual education will come from a thorough preparation. In this chapter, ten planning issues will be identified and discussed. They are formulated as key questions. The order of presentation does not reflect the importance of any specific issue. Further, definitive solutions to the issues identified here are not necessarily available. Each school community is different and therefore local solutions will need to be developed collaboratively.
3.1 Which language should we choose?

A school’s bilingual program will normally involve two languages. For most schools in Australia, this would mean English plus another language. The choice of the other language is not necessarily a straightforward issue. There are two basic situations a school might find itself in with regard to the choice of the second language. Some schools do not have an existing second language program and are therefore relatively free to choose the language since continuity is not a relevant concern. Other schools already have a second language program in place which may affect the decision-making process.

3.1.1 Schools without links

For schools without prior links or commitment to a given language, the choice of language may be based on two main considerations; firstly, the languages used in the school community, and secondly, the availability of resources. The issue of language distance in relation to English will also be discussed.

Where there is a significant single group of students with a background in a given language, the school may wish to choose this language for its bilingual program. One example might be a Greek Orthodox College with a large proportion of students whose parents use Greek and who have some knowledge of Greek themselves. The aims of a Greek/English immersion program might then be to support and foster the bilingualism of the background students, to develop a mutual understanding of background and non-background students’ languages and cultures as well as provide a second language learning experience for monolingual students.

In the situation where there are significant groups of students from a variety of language backgrounds, it might be more politic to choose a ‘neutral’ language not represented in the school community, so that no particular language or group could be perceived as advantaged.
A school may theoretically choose any language for its bilingual or LOTE program, however since the development of the Australian language and literacy policy (DEET, 1991), the second languages available for students to study in schools are generally characterised in one of three ways: as key languages, languages of particular community significance and languages for priority development. The languages involved differ according to each state and territory of Australia. The situation for Victoria is given in Table 3.1.

**TABLE 3.1 The categorisation of languages in Victoria**

| Key languages                                                                 | Chinese, French, German, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Modern Greek, Vietnamese |
| Languages of particular community significance                               | Auslan, Croatian, Hebrew, Khmer, Koorie languages, Macedonian, Maltese, Serbian and Turkish |
| Priority development languages                                                | Arabic, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Thai |

The different language categories attract varying levels of government support and the availability of resources and language-specific professional development also differs for each category. It is worth investigating the situation for a proposed language before making a final decision.

The success of any language program is linked to the quality of its human and physical resources. An assessment needs to be made as to the availability of these resources for the chosen language. Human resources include qualified teachers, teacher aides, consultants/pedagogic advisors and possibly of access to speakers in the wider community.

The potentially positive contribution of the different language teacher associations should be recognised and followed up. The Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers’ Associations (AFMLTA) is a national representative body; each state and territory in Australia has a Modern Language Teachers’ Association, and in some states there are single language associations such as the Association of French Teachers of Victoria (AFTV).
Some foreign governments also offer support for students studying the language of their country. Such support may include the provision of teachers or teaching assistants from that country, scholarships for students and exchange opportunities for staff. Some countries such as Germany have offices of the Goethe Institute located in Australia, which house teaching and reference materials, provide language-specific professional development for German teachers and assist teachers in the promotion of German to name only a few of their key functions. Such resources are invaluable for any German language program, not just a bilingual program.

Physical resources include teacher resources, textbooks, teaching aids such as realia, posters, flashcards and games, reference material including CD rom materials, readers, fiction and non-fiction books, cassettes and videos. Computers and computer software are essential tools in all educational settings. All languages will require language-specific software and for character-based languages the use of language specific keyboards might be considered desirable, thereby necessitating the purchase of new computers. The key issues are availability, accessibility and affordability.

Space is a final resource to be considered. All of the resources and equipment identified above need to be located somewhere and it needs to be considered whether they should be integrated into existing space (e.g. library, computer lab) or whether separate arrangements need to be made. The same situation applies to teaching rooms. It may be desirable to have a specific room or rooms for immersion classes. The advantages are that there is a clear association of the location with the second language. Further, such a room might store all of the language specific resources. Some programs involve withdrawing immersion students from their mainstream classes for specific subjects. In this case, additional rooms are required.

The issue of resource availability needs to be considered in light of the subjects to be offered as part of the bilingual program. Subject choice is discussed in more detail in Section 3.5.
3.1.2 Language distance

The issue of language distance between the students’ first language and the proposed language for the immersion program may influence the decision-making process. While everyone has the potential to learn any language, knowledge of one language exerts an influence on the acquisition of a second or subsequent language. Native speakers of English can learn any other language, though they will learn languages closely related to English such as German more quickly than languages that are very different to English such as Japanese. This should influence the language choice issue only in terms of what can be achieved within the given time constraints, as language distance is ‘only one factor which influences the ease or difficulty with which learners acquire new languages’ (Richards et al, 1992: 201).

A further complication arises with character-based languages like Chinese and Japanese. Learning a new script and needing to access information via a new written script is an additional burden that some may feel is inappropriate in a secondary immersion program where students do not have a background in the language. However, once mastered a new script or scripts represent a significant cognitive achievement that will broaden students’ understandings of literacy immensely.

3.1.3 Schools with links

The situation of schools with links to other languages is typical of most secondary schools. Continuity is a crucial component in successful language learning and the achievement of high levels of proficiency in second language learning is closely related to the amount of exposure students have to the target language and to ensuring that the language program is developmentally based. Therefore, providing learners with the opportunity to continue to learn the same language at secondary school that was offered at
primary school is an important one, provided that it does not involve repeating what was covered previously. One should not only expect learners to achieve a higher level of proficiency as a result of ten or eleven years of exposure but the availability of the same language in the secondary setting supports the primary LOTE program and can facilitate links between the language staff in the different schools or sections of the school.

In the situation where there are a number of different languages offered in the feeder primary schools, it may be politic to choose a different second language, so as not to advantage one particular group of learners. In this situation, the factors covered in the previous section may also influence the decision-making process. Alternatively, the learners who come to secondary school with significant knowledge of the L2 need to build on their achievements and also may require additional challenge in the language learning arena. An immersion program is ideal for such students. After seven years of a language-arts type program, an immersion program offers something different that is linguistically challenging.

3.2 When should we begin the bilingual program?

The initial decision confronting a P-12 school is whether the bilingual program should be started at the primary or secondary school level. The advantages and disadvantages for the different levels follow.

3.2.1 A primary bilingual program

There are three main reasons for introducing a bilingual program at the primary level. They are teacher availability, the nature of the curriculum content and programming flexibility. It is generally easier to find appropriate staff for a primary bilingual program.
than for a secondary program. For a teacher to work in a primary immersion program, they should meet the following criteria of having:

- a primary teaching qualification;
- high level of proficiency in the target language;
- a LOTE teaching qualification.

The generalist nature of the primary teaching qualification means that any classroom teacher theoretically has the knowledge and skills to teach in all areas of the curriculum. This is not true of secondary school teachers who usually only teach in two subject areas. Therefore, provided the primary teacher has the target language skills in the specific curriculum areas as well, for example, the ability to speak, read and write about science concepts in Chinese, he or she could be employed as an immersion teacher in a primary school.

The content and the typical teaching styles found in primary schools are potentially more conducive to a bilingual program. Primary school curricula tend to place emphasis on concrete concepts and personal and local knowledge. Further, the widespread use of integrated units as planning and organisational tools allows for revision and reinforcement of both language and content.

The accompanying teaching styles are generally more discovery and child-oriented with a greater focus on language than is common in the secondary school context. Primary-aged children are only exposed to more abstract and sophisticated areas of knowledge as they move through the school. In the early stages of a primary bilingual program, where most children would have very limited language proficiency in the L2, the cognitive demands of the subject matter are not great and the teaching is varied, cyclical and concrete, and is delivered at a pace commensurate with learner skill levels. As students develop more proficiency in the second language, they are more able to deal with material that is more cognitively demanding and possibly more abstract. At the secondary level, the curriculum material is often pre-determined by textbooks or compulsory assessment tasks shared across a year level. Further, the content is quite complex and abstract.
in nature and the volume of material students are expected to learn is also quite great. Therefore, there is potentially a greater gap between students’ proficiency levels in the L2 and the cognitive demands made of them in the different subject areas.

Compared with secondary schools, primary schools are characteristically more flexible. The fact that one teacher is responsible for a large part of the curriculum, both in terms of planning and delivery as well as the pastoral care duties of a given class means that there is an in-built flexibility and adaptability. Joint planning of integrated curriculum delivery is more feasible between two teachers, the classroom teacher and the immersion teacher, than would be the case in the secondary setting where each class would have a larger number of teachers and subject areas are allocated to different departments. However, it should be noted that teachers involved in bilingual programs often teach the immersion classes more than one subject.

In addition to these key reasons for introducing a bilingual program at the primary level, the arguments generally associated with primary LOTE also apply. They include greater acceptance of the second language, enthusiasm, increased risk-taking capacity and lack of inhibition.

Concern is sometimes voiced that the delivery of the curriculum via the medium of two languages places an unacceptable burden on very young students beginning school for the first time. This is clearly not true for students with a background in the language, as they would feel confident and comfortable working in this language. The availability of L2-speaking teachers and students must surely aid transition to school. Students with a background in another language as well as English are familiar with the language learning context, have well-developed ‘guessing skills’ and a demonstrated capacity for language learning which should enable them to thrive in the L3 context (de Courcy, 2002).

Monolingual English-speaking primary students are generally very accepting of bilingual teaching. They don’t know that this is not
standard for all school children and they love the challenge of guessing what’s going on and trying out strange sounding words. The children themselves can use English at any time they wish, though this is discouraged as students’ proficiency levels increase, and they can therefore expect to be understood and their needs for acknowledgement, assistance and reassurance met albeit through the medium of the second language.

The issue of biliteracy is sometimes raised in the context of emergent readers and writers. Clearly biliteracy is a desirable outcome of any language program and therefore should be part of the overall bilingual program. Some schools deal with the possible ‘double burden’ issue by emphasising English literacy in the first year and concentrating on oral and aural skills in the second language. Other schools have noted that their students are well able to keep the two languages and writing systems separate and therefore are neither burdened nor confused. For home background learners, there is research evidence suggesting that it is beneficial for students to acquire proficiency in their first language first and that these skills are transferable to their second language. Further, the approach to literacy teaching of the immersion teacher may be different to the classroom teacher, e.g. a whole word approach to Chinese characters, a phonics approach in Hebrew, which is potentially enriching to all learners and crucial for those few learners for whom the classroom teacher’s approach has not been successful.

3.2.2 A secondary bilingual program

Because of the large quantity of curricular material to be covered and its more cognitively demanding nature, it is not common for schools to begin a bilingual program at the secondary level unless the learners have some background in the language. It is generally felt that learners need to have achieved a certain level of proficiency in the second language to cope adequately with cognitively more sophisticated material (Cummins in Baker, 1993). Thus a secondary bilingual program is suitable for learners with a home background
in the language or for learners who have had a quality LOTE experience in the primary school. For both sets of learners, a bilingual program offers new linguistic challenges in areas they have not previously been exposed to. A secondary bilingual program is also the only logical progression for students who have participated in a primary bilingual program in that language.

Although secondary bilingual programs for learners without a background in the language are not as common as primary bilingual programs in Australia, there are plenty of successful examples of secondary bilingual programs both here and overseas. In particular, many of the Queensland bilingual programs (Berthold, 1995) are for secondary students with no or only a limited background in the language. It appears that the students require a period of intense language teaching prior to or concurrently with the actual start of immersion teaching. There is evidence that such secondary bilingual programs succeed best with highly motivated learners. Section 3.7 deals further with the issue of student selection.

It is difficult to continue with an immersion language program for all of the secondary curriculum. In the senior years, Years 11 and 12, the diversity of subject choice makes offering an immersion program non-viable. Further, there is currently no provision for completing final assessment tasks in languages other than English except in the various LOTE subjects.

Staffing secondary bilingual programs has been more difficult than in primary programs because of the specialist nature of the pre-service training of secondary teachers. In order to teach in a secondary immersion program, the teacher would need to have the following qualifications:

- an academic background and method training in a KLA other than LOTE or English;
- LOTE method training;
- high proficiency in the language including in the area of specialisation, i.e. Maths, Science, SOSE.
Native-speaking teachers need to have experience of the Australian educational culture, knowledge of the Australian-specific nature of some of the content areas, particularly SOSE, and high levels of English proficiency. It can be difficult to find appropriately trained staff.

In order to finish on a positive note, the benefits of offering secondary learners the opportunity to participate in an immersion program should be mentioned. Secondary learners have a greater knowledge of the world, more developed metalinguistic awareness, sophisticated language and literacy skills in at least one language and hopefully well-developed study skills. They are more independent and can work autonomously, and they have the potential to rely on intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation which is thought to be more sustaining. The result is that they have the potential to achieve more in a shorter space of time.

3.3 The time factor

One of the greatest advantages of immersion education is the ‘two for one’ aspect. By teaching subject matter through the medium of a second language, there is no additional burden on the so-called crowded curriculum since there is no extra subject; instead the students have increased exposure to the second language. It is the amount (and quality) of exposure to the L2 that is the significant issue.

Research suggests that the positive benefits of immersion education follow most profoundly and clearly from early full immersion (e.g. Lambert and Tucker, 1972; Swain and Lapkin, 1982); that is, the situation where students learn all of their subjects via the medium of a second language from the beginning of their schooling. However, language programs that do not conform to the early full immersion model (see section 2.1.2) are nonetheless beneficial.

The decision about what proportion of the curriculum should be devoted to the bilingual program is influenced by the program’s goals. If a program’s main goal is to provide more challenging extension work for advanced language students, a single content-based subject offered as one of a range of options is one possible immersion-based model. It should be noted that
such a language program would not normally be considered an immersion program but rather an enrichment language program. The widely accepted baseline for the ‘immersion’ designation is 50 per cent of the curriculum.

Both linguistic and other benefits will follow from any quality immersion program though there appears to be a clear relationship between the amount of time and the level of benefit. From a language proficiency perspective, the relationship can be simply expressed. The more time devoted to the second language, the greater the possible linguistic benefit. This is a significant issue for the school community to understand. Students involved in a partial immersion program comprising 7.5 hours a week are unlikely to achieve native-like competence in the second language even after seven years of primary school. A school year does not comprise 365 teaching days and the total number of hours of exposure to the L2 a student could possibly hope to have access to is 2100 hours which is really only the equivalent of a few months in-country experience. It is also important to compare what can be achieved in an immersion program with the alternative LOTE or language-arts program which might deliver only 560 hours of language exposure over seven years. Thus, more is better from an immersion education perspective. However, more limited programs should not be rejected, rather the level of expectation regarding potential benefits of such a program will require commensurate modification. The qualitative aspect of time also needs consideration and is discussed further in section 3.6.

The issue of timing in partial immersion programs should also be addressed. Participating in subjects taught in a language one is not fluent in is a demanding and tiring undertaking. Students are required to concentrate very hard in order to make sense of the content being delivered. For this reason, some schools have found it useful to try to spread the immersion subjects across the timetable and across the school week. Other schools have blocked the immersion subjects together so that students avoid ‘chopping and changing’ languages. There is, however, no evidence to suggest that one approach is more successful than another.
3.4 What makes a good bilingual teacher?

As mentioned in the previous section, there are a number of qualifications that teachers must have in order to work in a bilingual program. The two most fundamental qualifications required apply to content knowledge and language knowledge. In order to teach effectively in a content-based language program, teachers must have a knowledge of the content area to be taught (e.g. science) and a high level of proficiency in the language. Hopefully, all language teachers are highly proficient in the language they are teaching, that is they feel comfortable delivering all of the lessons solely in the target language and their competence in the language includes speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. In the case of bilingual teachers, their proficiency must extend to the subject areas they are to teach, that is they must be familiar with the technical vocabulary associated with the photosynthesis process if they are to teach a science unit on plants and energy in the target language. Teachers must also be able to access reference texts in the target language in order to prepare units of work.

The other crucial qualification that must be considered is methodology. An immersion drama teacher needs to know how to teach drama. Language and content knowledge is not sufficient. Similarly, a French-speaking music teacher needs to understand how the French language works, how people learn languages and what teachers need to do in order to facilitate the acquisition of a second language. It is not enough to be a fluent French-speaking musician. These knowledge and skills are gained through experience and study of (Applied) Linguistics and a LOTE methodology course.

The final essential qualification is knowledge of English and the Australian classroom culture. If we return to section 2.1.1 and the core features of an immersion program, specific reference is made to teachers being bilingual and that the classroom culture is that of the L1 community. From a language perspective, students need to know that if they speak English they will be understood. Further, the teacher will want to make links between the L1 and L2 to encourage the development of metalinguistic awareness and learning strategies in the students.

The ‘optional extras’ that are highly desirable for bilingual staff would be a postgraduate qualification in Bilingual or Immersion Education and experience with content-based teaching.
3.4.1 What about native-speakers?

Finding someone who meets all of the criteria described in point 3.4 is going to be one of the greatest challenges facing the school. One related issue needs to be canvassed before concluding this section, namely, that of the native-speaker of the target language. It is our view that both native-speaking and non-native teachers should be considered for appointment to a bilingual program.

Native-speakers generally fulfil the requirement of high level target language proficiency. If they have studied in their home country, they will also have the technical knowledge in the target language to teach content-based subjects. High levels of English proficiency are, however, also important since the bilingual teacher will need to communicate closely and effectively with classroom teachers and colleagues teaching in the same subject area as well as with other staff and parents. Further, much of the curriculum material and reference texts needed for planning and preparation will be in English.

Local content knowledge is also important. A bilingual teacher who has studied politics in Germany may not have the necessary knowledge of the Australian political system and its history in order to teach a social studies unit on ‘our government’.

Native-speakers who have already taught in an Australian school have had the opportunity to gain an insight into the culture of the Australian classroom. Classroom culture encompasses such things as the role and status of the teacher, classroom management styles, the relationship between the teacher and the students, the nature of contact between the school and home, expectations of teachers, students, school administration and parents, and many other factors. As de Courcy (1997) points out, lack of familiarity with Australian cultural norms can be a source of misunderstanding and potential distress for both the native-speaker teacher and the members of the school community.

The fact that a native-speaker applicant meets some but not all of the criteria described here is not necessarily grounds for rejection. Additional preparation time, support, mentoring and access to professional development are means of overcoming potential gaps.
3.4.2 The non-native speaker as a bilingual teacher

A non-native speaker in the immersion context generally fulfils the language and culture requirements, that is they have probably grown up in the Australian classroom culture and are native-speakers of English. If they have studied the appropriate subjects in Australia, they have the required knowledge base to teach those subjects. The key issue with non-native speakers is linguistic proficiency in relation to the content-areas. Non-native teachers with very high levels of proficiency in the target language have the potential to acquire the language they need in order to teach content-based subjects. However, the same strategies outlined above for native-speaker teachers may need to be adopted, that is more preparation time, access to native-speaker linguistic support, team teaching with a native-speaker and further professional development, possibly in the form of additional language study and the opportunity for acquiring in-country experience.

Some non-native teachers prefer to take responsibility for the Language Arts component of the bilingual program. In the best immersion programs, students do not simply follow the traditional LOTE program but have specially designed language-focussed programs which support and supplement students’ learning derived from the content-based aspect of the program. In this situation, the non-native teacher relies on the bilingual teacher to indicate the language material to be covered in the language arts component of the course.

3.5 Resources

Obviously the key resource in any bilingual program is qualified, competent and motivated teaching staff. However, the physical resources also have an important role to play in the success of the program. The availability of teaching and learning resources may be a significant factor in deciding which language to offer in the bilingual program.
3.5.1 Teaching and learning resources

Because an immersion program involves the delivery of the Australian curriculum of the different content-areas through the medium of another language, much of the material will need to be created by the teachers working in the program. It is important to understand that there are no shortcuts available in the development of teaching and learning resources for immersion programs.

In the case of secondary immersion programs, where the curriculum content is more likely to be clearly specified and tied to a textbook, it has been suggested that an equivalent textbook from the target country be adopted. This is not feasible for a number of reasons. Overseas textbooks may not be suitable for content, language and cultural reasons. The content may not cover the same areas as in Australian schools and it is unlikely that more general topics such as ‘the environment’ will be related to the Australian context. The language and learning activities of textbooks designed for native-speakers will generally be far too difficult for second language learners. Further, specifically designed exercises which emphasise the language are required in immersion classes. Finally, textbooks are cultural constructions and as such reflect different values held by the communities who created them. Such features as the type and use of illustrative material, the quantity of text and the use of different text and task-types may vary between cultures. Further, the educational outcomes that the textbooks are expected to facilitate are unlikely to be identical to those of the Australian curriculum.

In the case of primary immersion programs, there is sometimes the misconception that the teaching materials designed for native-speakers will be linguistically simpler and are therefore potentially implementable in the Australian educational context. Unfortunately there is a problem of mismatch. Year 6 Australian students may understand social studies texts written for Year 2 German students but they are cognitively and socially four years older than Year 2 students, so the materials are not suitable on pedagogic grounds.
The reality is that immersion teachers will need to spend large amounts of time translating and adapting Australian materials and modifying target language materials, and this is only the tip of the iceberg. Immersion teaching is not the same as LOTE teaching or the teaching of another subject area in English, as is clearly demonstrated by the following comment of a Year 3 immersion teacher:

*Planning an immersion Maths lesson isn’t just planning a normal Maths lesson. You can’t just consider teaching a child something. You have to consider the whole history of what they know, the vocabulary they’ve already acquired and where you’re going with that sort of thing, as well, you know. That takes a lot of thought. And even though you’re not quite sure of how you’re doing that, you’re naturally considering language all the time, the same as content.*

Students are expected to understand relatively sophisticated content and develop relevant academic skills via the medium of a language they are not fluent in. In order to facilitate this learning, teachers need to use enormous quantities of support materials (e.g. flashcards, diagrams, realia) to introduce the new material and to design special tasks and worksheets to reinforce both the language and the content. Further, since content-based language programs emphasise content goals and language goals, different types of activities need to be created to support students in their development of L2 speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. So role-plays and oral presentations may be required in immersion science lessons but not necessarily in mainstream science classes. In the case of individual or group project work, students need access to suitable target language source material which the teacher will have to locate and evaluate beforehand.
An important feature of immersion programs is the language-arts component of the course. While it is possible to simply follow the LOTE curriculum of the given year level, this is not the best option. The language-arts component needs to be specifically geared to support the students’ language needs in the content-based subjects as well as supplying students with relevant cultural knowledge. Examples might include finding out about the life and times of a composer whose work is being played in Music classes, or reading a short story about a family’s experience of an earthquake relating to a natural disaster unit in Geography. Such materials will need to be created by the language-arts teacher in consultation with the immersion teacher.

The need for additional preparation time and language aide support is an important issue to address in the delivery of a quality bilingual program and to avoid teacher-burnout.

3.5.2 Physical resources

The issue of whether to physically separate or mainstream the immersion classes requires some consideration. It may be important for immersion classes to be held in normal classrooms for social/political reasons such as to emphasise the fact that the immersion stream is merely one feature of the whole school curriculum and that the immersion students are just doing their Maths in Japanese. However, a case can be made for a separate immersion room. There is a greater need for students to have visual and language support in the form of posters, charts, labelled displays etc. and also to have direct access to reference materials such as language dictionaries and grammar books. Also such a room is an obvious place to house computers with different keyboards and/or L2 software. From a linguistic perspective, the immersion room can be made into ‘a little part of China’ and as such can serve as a trigger to switch to the exclusive use of Mandarin.

The use of bilingual signs and notices around the school reinforces the language and indicates the whole school’s support of the language program in an overt way. For parents with a background in the language, this can make the school seem more accessible and welcoming.
3.6 Which subjects should we choose?

The discussion of subject choice needs to occur under the assumption that appropriately qualified staff are available to teach the various subjects. If current staff can only offer certain subjects then the decision about which subjects to include in the immersion program is straightforward. However, if all subjects are potentially available then there are some features of different subjects that need to be taken into consideration.

We would like to begin this section by pointing out that all subjects are potentially useful contexts for language learning. It is self-evident that different school subjects make different demands on students. When considering subjects for selection in a bilingual program, it is the linguistic demands and opportunities offered by the different subjects that should be taken into account as a matter of priority. If one of the aims of the bilingual program is for students to achieve high levels of bilingualism and biliteracy, students need to be exposed to a rich language environment and have progressively more varied and challenging linguistic demands placed on them. Thus subjects need to be considered primarily as vehicles for language acquisition.

Subjects like Physical Education and Art are examples of practical subjects where language does not play the dominant role that it does in a subject like Social Studies. Students need to understand what is said to them and can demonstrate their understanding using actions and limited language. There is normally reduced reliance on written texts in these subjects. Therefore such subjects may be most appropriate during the early stages of a bilingual program. However, their scope for providing a context in which high level literacy skills in the second language can be developed is obviously relatively limited. Subjects like Science and Geography are highly dependent on language and provide a wide variety of language opportunities but still have a practical hands-on component that makes them ideal as vehicles for language acquisition.
A subject like History or Social Studies can be linguistically demanding. History can be heavily dependent on written texts and may require extended written responses from students and in Social Studies the discussion of some issues such as human relationships may require high-level oral skills. Unless they are modified, such subjects are probably best left until later in an immersion program, once students have developed more proficiency in the second language.

It is interesting to consider the students’ perspective on subject choice, as well, and here we will refer to some interviews that Michèle de Courcy conducted with some late immersion students at two high schools in Queensland in 1991. There were interesting responses to her two questions – ‘which subject is the easiest to do in French?’ and ‘which subject do you think you learn the most French in?’.

Most of the students interviewed expressed the view that the easiest subject to do in French was Maths, ‘because it’s just numbers’ or ‘in Maths you just use the same vocab’, but that the subject in which they learnt the most French was Living in Society (SOSE in Victoria) because ‘in LS you.... learn a new thing each time it comes along with a new set of vocabulary … and I mean, we wouldn’t know that stuff, but in Science, some of the words are kind of in English’. Other groups of students thought that it was either in Science or Social Studies that they learnt the most French.

Michèle de Courcy’s work with these students and their teachers is reported in de Courcy (1993, 1995) and goes into some detail about the adaptation of language and classroom routines that enabled comprehensible input and output to be provided in these subjects.

The social context of subject selection does require some comment. Philosophically speaking, all subjects are of equal value and academic merit, but in reality there is a hierarchy of subject importance. In fact there are a number of hierarchies; students’ rating of subjects is different from that of their parents which in turn may be different to how teachers perceive the relative importance of a given subject. In order that the proposed bilingual program remain unaligned, it is worth considering a balance of ‘important’ and ‘less important’ subjects as judged by your school community. Such a decision reflects the school’s confidence in the efficacy of bilingual education. A broad subject selection sends the message that any subject can be successfully taught through the medium of a second language.
3.7 Should we select the students?

The decision of whether the bilingual program should be available to all students or only particular students is significant. One possible view is articulated in the following comment by a Year 9 French immersion student: ‘It’s really good: I think everybody should do it’. An alternative view is expressed by a non-immersion teacher who commented that her school’s secondary bilingual program ‘allows high achievers to be challenged and extended’. These two views probably represent the two possible attitudinal extremes. Some background knowledge is required before forming one’s own opinion.

Being selective about individuals and creating ‘special groups’ is contentious in Australian society. Therefore, there is often a reluctance to select particular students to participate in an immersion program where it does not involve the entire school. There are two main reasons for wanting to select students for an immersion program. The first and most common situation occurs when only a limited number of places is available and the demand is greater. The second situation is where particular types of students are sought and others rejected for various reasons.

Research suggests that students of all abilities should normally be able to participate adequately in an immersion program, achieving outcomes commensurate with their academic ability and level of commitment. Since there is a target language only approach in immersion programs, students with limited English should not be denied access to the program. Selection criteria are essentially a matter of choice.

The selection criteria adopted may relate to the aims of the program. The immersion program may have been set up to cater for students with a background in the language, either from home or from primary school and the aim is to provide them with an appropriately challenging language learning environment that will ensure their language skills continue to develop. Thus criteria relating to level of language proficiency would be appropriate in this context.

The immersion program may be part of the school’s enrichment strategy designed to cater to the needs of gifted and talented students. In this case, the selection criteria may be related to high academic performance or the potential for it.
If the immersion program’s goals are not geared to meeting the needs of specific groups of learners, the evidence from Australian bilingual schools seems to be that attitudes to the language and language learning and motivation to learn are more important than academic ability. Referring to the immersion program he set up in an independent boys’ school in Queensland, Steve Davies wrote:

> beyond a certain minimal intellectual capacity, attitude to the language and being a member of the class is probably just as, if not more, important than academic ability. The average student who enjoys the atmosphere in the immersion classroom and whose motivation drives him to produce his best work will probably benefit more than the blasé brighter student who only cruises throughout the program. (Davies, 1995: 59)

Whatever criteria are adopted, consideration needs to be given to the evidence required to assess them. Such evidence might take the form of interviews, recommendations from previous teachers, school reports, student essays or a specially designed questionnaire. The selection process is time-consuming, a factor which may also influence the data collection techniques chosen.

### 3.8 The aims of the program

Introducing a bilingual program in a school community is a bold and challenging initiative that will arouse interest and excitement but also possibly feelings of scepticism and uncertainty among members of the school community. It is important that the aims of the bilingual program are stated clearly and understood by all of the stakeholders. The stakeholders include the students, their parents, the teaching staff and school management and administration. All of the members of these groups need to have a basic understanding of what the program is, why it has been introduced and who is involved. It is our view that access to such information can prevent misunderstandings and resentment but also that the promotion and support of the program can be shared by the whole school community. For example, it was an unfortunate oversight that in one Victorian bilingual school, the Year 7 coordinator who visited all the local primary schools to encourage the pupils to attend his particular secondary school never thought to mention that the school had an immersion program in place that operated from Years 7 to 10.
All of the aims of a bilingual program may not be relevant to all the stakeholders, and different members of a particular group will have different reasons for being involved. For example, the principal’s main aim for the bilingual program may be to attract more students to the school, the LOTE teacher may wish to increase VCE LOTE numbers, a student might enjoy the intellectual challenge and her parents may wish their daughter to learn the language of her ancestors to the highest possible level. Nonetheless, the different aims need to be identified and articulated. They serve as an overall goal, a rationale and are important for any effective evaluation of the program. This issue is addressed in section 3.10.

3.9 Contingency plans

The issue of contingency plans may seem to be inappropriately located in the planning section, however it is common for people when presented with new ideas to respond with ‘what if...’ worst-case scenario situations and expect sensible answers. Therefore, it is worth considering some of the ‘what if... situations’ and having a possible response mapped out.

Some of the worst-case scenario situations your school might face include the following:

- the immersion teacher becomes seriously ill or leaves the school;
- a student wants to leave the program before the end of the year;
- a student is struggling with/disrupting the program;
- not quite enough students (e.g. 18 instead of the required 20) elect to participate in the program;
- the class’s results are significantly lower in a given subject when compared with a parallel non-immersion class;
- the immersion class has not kept up with the parallel non-immersion class;
- parents want to remove their child from the program;
- the program is abandoned prematurely.
The school also needs to consider the best-case scenario possibilities as well. They may include:

- the program is so successful that parents and students want it to continue in following years;
- the program is so successful that you have enough students for two classes;
- you have a constant stream of visitors wanting to observe the program in action;
- the immersion group has developed a very strong, supportive bond, but one which excludes other students.

There are probably other scenarios that warrant some attention in the planning stages. We have deliberately not outlined ‘solutions’ to these problems. It is our view that appropriate responses will be very much context-dependent. Some ideas are given in the next chapter.

### 3.10 Program evaluation

Program evaluation is a quality control mechanism that can occur formally or informally. A more formal type of program evaluation might be undertaken by an independent consultant brought into the school specifically to undertake an evaluation of the school’s bilingual program. An example of a simple informal evaluation would be what normally occurs each year when teachers meet to discuss the textbook selection for the following year. Teachers use their own observations and knowledge of the class and its performance to make a judgment about the effectiveness and suitability of a given textbook. Both informal and formal evaluations can take many different forms such as observation, testing, questionnaires and interviews and the reasons for choosing a particular means of evaluation include the goals of the evaluation, funding availability and time constraints.

While it is important for all language programs to regularly undergo the process of evaluation, it is crucial for new and innovative ones
such as an immersion program to undertake them for reasons of accountability. By adopting an immersion model for its language program, a school is making a curriculum change which must be able to be justified and its effectiveness judged. A school which introduces a new bilingual program can be perceived to be undertaking an educational experiment which requires monitoring to ensure that students in particular are not at risk and to document and measure the implications for the wider school community.

In the first year of a new bilingual program both formative and summative evaluations will need to be undertaken; that is, the program is evaluated both during and at the end of the year. A proposed evaluation plan in place before the bilingual program actually begins has the potential to reassure anxious and sceptical stakeholders. Regular reports of the different evaluation results and the school’s response shared with the school community will ensure the ongoing engagement of stakeholders.

The questions to be addressed in the evaluation will be linked to the aims of the program. For example, if one of the goals of a bilingual program is to enable some students to achieve higher levels of proficiency in the second language than would normally be achieved in a standard LOTE class, some form of testing comparing immersion and non-immersion students would be a possible evaluation design. Self-evaluations undertaken by older students might also yield interesting data.

Teachers will also benefit from participating in or conducting different forms of program evaluation. For example, they will be able to use constructive feedback on their teaching style and approach to further improve the program.

As stated previously, the issue of program evaluation is an important one. It requires careful planning if the results are to be credible and informative. Lynch (1990) and Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1992) are useful references.
Chapter 4

The Implementation Process
4.0 Introduction

The following sections present a possible implementation plan for a bilingual program in the form of a series of steps. We use the analogy of a sporting game. The steps are, however, not necessarily sequential. Some steps need to occur concurrently and many of the issues outlined in a given step will be ongoing. Nonetheless, we hope that this chapter will serve as a starting point in developing your own school’s implementation plan.

4.1 Step 1: Do we have a ball game?

The main purpose of this initial step is to introduce the idea of a bilingual program to the decision-makers of the school and to gain permission to present the proposal to the whole school community. This is the first part of an initial information campaign in which you want to give only as much information as people need in order to make an informed decision about whether they wish to be involved. Once the decision has been made to implement an immersion program, a more in-depth information campaign needs to be pursued. Finding out how educational decisions are made within your school and following accepted protocol is a safe path to follow. Alternatively, if you think you are likely to have more success by going to the top and speaking to the principal directly, then you should do so and then skip to sub-section 4.1.3.

4.1.1 The Head of LOTE

It is most likely that the idea of introducing a bilingual program into a school will originate with a member of the LOTE staff. The Head of the LOTE department will obviously need to be informed as an initial step if it is not his or her idea. The Head of LOTE may need to give permission for you to present your proposal or may need to make the presentation for you. A briefing document similar to the one described in sub-section 4.1.3 may be appropriate to convince the department head of the worth of the proposal. It should be pointed out that, at a later stage, it is
possible to have a Head of LOTE and a Bilingual Coordinator who are not necessarily the same person. The person who is passionate about bilingual education and motivated to make it work needs to be the ‘front person’ since passion and motivation are likely to be infectious and to give the bilingual ball a ‘kick-start’.

4.1.2 The Curriculum Coordinator

Depending on the decision-making process followed in your school, it is possible that you may need to present your proposal to the Curriculum Coordinator and/or the Curriculum Committee before the Principal becomes involved. In this case, you will need to get their support in order to proceed to the Principal for a final decision.

Irrespective of whether the Curriculum Coordinator and/or committee is part of the decision-making process, they will also need to understand your proposal to a similar degree that the Principal does. Therefore, it would be appropriate to follow the same procedure described below, that is to provide them with a briefing document and show the video, Room for Two. Alternatively, it might be possible to make an oral presentation at a committee meeting which you would base on the briefing document.

4.1.3 The Principal

Obviously without the wholehearted support of the Principal, no initiative such as a bilingual program will be able to be introduced. It is worth considering your proposal from a Principal’s point of view. Principals bear the ultimate responsibility for any new undertaking. They need to be sure that students will not be educationally at risk, that the proposed initiative has the potential to deliver better outcomes than what is currently offered, that the new initiative can be funded and that it will enjoy the support of the majority of the school community. The support of the Principal is often regarded as the crucial factor in the ultimate success of a bilingual program. To some extent, you and the Principal will be the public face of the proposal and the program and therefore the Principal needs to be informed about the theoretical side of
bilingual education and the practical ramifications so that he or she may address concerns and disseminate information in an authoritative and enthusiastic manner. Principals are also extremely busy people so the learning curve needs to happen as expeditiously as possible.

Our suggestion is that the Principal is presented with a written brief to read before a face-to-face meeting with the LOTE teacher. The form the brief might take is given in Figure 4.1.

FIGURE 4.1 Principal’s briefing document

1. BACKGROUND
   a) The current LOTE situation at your school
      - L2s taught
      - time allocation
      - levels offered
      - number of teachers/students
   b) The strengths of the current program
   c) Weaknesses/areas for improvement in the current program
      - the LOTE teacher perspective
      - the student perspective
      - the ‘best practice’ language learning perspective

2. PROPOSED PROGRAM
   a) Brief explanation of what an immersion program involves and what type of program you are proposing, e.g. early partial immersion
   b) Brief description of the proposed program
      - language
      - level/s
      - subjects
      - criteria for student selection, if appropriate
      - staff availability
3. RATIONALE
   a) In light of section one, explain how and why an immersion program might address these problems, enhance the current offerings, provide additional benefits and/or fit in with the school’s educational philosophy.

   b) You will need to justify each decision you have made in your proposal and have outlined in section two. For example, explain why you chose Italian and not French, or why you propose to begin the program at Year 1 level and not at Prep level.

4. ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY
   This section should focus on the benefits and outcomes such a bilingual program might have with an emphasis on those aspects most relevant to your school.

5. A POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN
   This section would not need to be detailed but would need to include a time line and an outline of the necessary steps to be undertaken.

6. CONCLUSION

The briefing document might be accompanied by a copy of the Room for Two video (see bibliography) which is a non-technical presentation of the Bayswater South Primary School German program. The various stakeholders and other experts are interviewed and there is footage of actual classes taking place. For principals without a second language or LOTE background, it may be useful to actually see a partial immersion program operating in a Victorian school.

The advantage of giving the Principal briefing notes before a meeting is essentially to provide an opportunity to digest the information and develop a considered response. If the principal is supportive of your proposal, he or she will need to participate in further professional development on the issue, visit one or more existing programs and read more widely on the subject.
4.2 Step 1: Getting the ball rolling

At this point, we are assuming that you have permission to proceed with your proposal. The second step is still part of the initial information campaign described in the previous section. The audience is different and the level of information they require will also be different. The most successful bilingual programs enjoy widespread support. For an immersion program to work, it will need the support of the curriculum coordinator/committee, the LOTE department and the department heads of the subjects to be included in the program and ideally the rest of school staff. The proposed immersion program will impact on all members of the school community and therefore they deserve to be informed. However, at this stage of the implementation plan, it is the parents and the students who are the key decision-makers. They have to be convinced to participate in the proposed program.

4.2.1 The LOTE Department

It is interesting and somewhat ironic to note that LOTE department staff are not always particularly supportive of a proposed bilingual program. It may be threatening to them personally, in that they may not feel competent to teach in such a program or they may be envious because they will not be qualified to teach in the program. There is also often a concern that it would be detrimental to the student’s subject matter learning. At this stage of the process though, these concerns, if expressed, need to be noted and acknowledged, but a definitive response can be postponed until a later stage.

The LOTE staff need to be kept informed but they also need to inform themselves more fully through professional reading, visits to existing programs and relevant professional development activities, where they are available. All of the LOTE staff, because of their professional affiliation, may be called on by other members of the school community to provide information about bilingual education once the idea is in the public domain, and you want this information to be correct and consistent with the information that you have disseminated.
4.2.2 Other Heads of Department

The primary school equivalent of a secondary Head of Department is probably the classroom teacher. Both classroom teachers and Heads of Department will have concerns about whether immersion actually works. They may feel that they are relinquishing control of the delivery of their syllabus to the LOTE department and have reservations about this. Particularly in the case of secondary schools, where there are likely to be immersion and non-immersion streams in a given year level, teachers will have concerns about equality and parity. Questions such as ‘Will the immersion class cover exactly the same content in the same depth as the parallel class?’, ‘Will students perform at the same levels if they are expected to complete their work in Indonesian?’, and ‘What about assessment and exams?’ can be expected. If the classroom teacher is not convinced that students are learning the content-areas delivered in Japanese, he or she may feel the need to recap the lessons at a later stage in English which would undermine the entire immersion program. The concerns raised by these teachers are justified and require a considered response. ‘Seeing is believing’ is the key here. If the relevant people can experience an immersion lesson themselves, observe an immersion class in another school and/or speak to relevant staff from other bilingual schools, issues can be addressed in a credible, informative manner.
4.2.3 The staff

The weekly staff meeting is an appropriate venue to introduce your proposal to the entire staff. It would not be fair or politic to expect them to attend a special meeting in their own time to be briefed on your proposal. Staff need an outline of the proposal based on the brief prepared for the principal, the opportunity to view a video of an immersion program and/or to have an immersion experience themselves.

Exposing people to a mini immersion lesson can have a number of spin-offs. Participants can find it terrifying, frustrating or stimulating which will allow them to empathise with your students. If you can succeed in teaching them something from another content-area such as a biological fact, the components and order of a chemical process, how to perform a mathematical operation or how to cook a particular dish, you will have hopefully overcome the basic issue of whether and how immersion works. If you also ask the participants to reflect on how they think immersion teaching works, they will hopefully be able to empathise with the time, effort and skill required by immersion teachers in the delivery of content-based lessons. This latter aspect is particularly important if immersion staff are given additional preparation time or relieved from some additional duties.

Staff will also be particularly interested in the evaluation and contingency plans, since they will form their own opinions on the effectiveness of the program and they may have to deal with issues raised by immersion students in the course of the year. Again, the level of detail will be different once the proposal has been accepted and is implemented.
4.2.4 Parents and students

Involving students in the decision-making process and information campaign is probably only relevant in optional secondary or upper primary programs. A two-pronged approach is effective with students. Current LOTE lessons can be used to explain briefly about the proposed program and expose the students to a mini immersion lesson.

The opportunity to reflect on the experience and to ask questions in a familiar context is quite important. It is sometimes useful to use a visiting teacher, for example, an immersion teacher from another program, to give this information session a new and exciting element. Initially, your focus would be on the positive benefits of being involved in the bilingual program in order to encourage as many people as possible to come to a Parent Information Session to be held out of school hours. A brief outline of the proposal needs to be disseminated to all parents via the school newsletter prior to the Parent Information Session. Parents unable to attend the session need to have access to the folder of information to be handed out at the information evening.

The information folder might include:

- an outline of the evening’s program;
- a list of the staff to be involved in the project, their area of responsibility in relation to the program and contact details where appropriate;
- an overview of the proposed program including subjects, year levels involved and a possible timetable;
- a list of key terms relevant to the proposed program, e.g. LOTE, VCE, content-based teaching, immersion;
- a timeline of important dates;
- an annotated reference list including websites relevant to bilingual education, including other Australian schools offering an immersion program;
- information/publicity about the importance of foreign language learning and the chosen L2 in particular.
The Parent Information Session is an important platform in the initial information campaign. Although it is aimed at parents, students are also welcome to attend.

A possible format for the evening is given in Figure 4.2.

FIGURE 4.2 Parent Information Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.15pm</td>
<td>Arrival and collection of the Immersion Program Information Folder. Opportunity to view a display of current students’ work and materials related to bilingual education, e.g. workbooks from students in an existing program, teaching materials, reference materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.30pm</td>
<td>Welcome by the Principal including a brief summary of the background of the proposed immersion program. Introduction of the speakers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.45pm</td>
<td>Bilingual education: What is it? How does it work? Talk with visual support materials by an outside consultant or teacher/principal from a bilingual school. Opportunity for questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.15pm</td>
<td>Break with tea/coffee and cake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.30pm</td>
<td>Presentation of the proposed bilingual program by the LOTE teacher. Opportunity for questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00pm</td>
<td>Mini-immersion lesson with a small number of volunteer students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10pm</td>
<td>Farewell by the Principal including a description of application/permission process. Dissemination of forms and additional information.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the conclusion of the Parent Information Session, both students and parents should have sufficient knowledge to make a decision about whether they wish to be involved.
4.3 Step 3: Shall we play?

This step in the implementation plan centres on the decision to proceed. This decision will rest on whether there is sufficient student interest and the availability and willingness of appropriate staff. The minimum number of students required to make the immersion program feasible will have been determined beforehand. Reports from other schools who have implemented a bilingual program mention that numbers are often lower than expected in the initial year of a new program, possibly due to some reluctance to be the ‘guinea pigs’; however, the same schools report that the numbers increase once the success of the first year has been demonstrated.

4.4 Step 4: Who’ll play?

This step has two parts and actually may need to be considered before the Parent Information Evening. With regard to the first step, the decision-makers need to determine if there is going to be an official selection policy in relation to student involvement in the immersion program, and if so, what the criteria will be. If there is to be an official selection policy, this should be explained at the Parent Information Evening and in the Information Folder. If the program is to be open to all students, then this part of the step can be ignored.

Once the expression of interest or permission forms have been returned after the information evening, the applicants need to be vetted. It is possible that some students you would have expected to apply have not done so, and there might also be some students, whom you think might not be suitable. In either case students and their parents may need to be approached individually to resolve any relevant issues.

If there are more applicants than available places, then a selection process will need to be undertaken. The same process as the one described above should be followed. It is worth having a reserve list of interested students who might replace students who change their minds or do not continue with the program during the year.
4.5 Step 5: What are the rules?

Participation in an immersion program will make significant demands on students and they need to be made aware of these demands. For example, students will need to concentrate very hard during class, be prepared to do extra homework (i.e. vocabulary learning), catch up on missed work, take responsibility for their own learning and possibly have lower marks than they would normally expect in the early stages of the program. Furthermore, students may also need to agree to a set of expectations such as appropriate behaviour and use of English. This might be presented in the form of a contract or a detailed acceptance form.

4.6 Step 6: In case of inclement weather...

Students and parents need to be given an immersion information booklet. This booklet is intended to serve a number of purposes. It will hopefully make for a smooth transition into the immersion program and will serve as an initial reference point when difficulties arise. It may be appropriate to include some parent or student-specific information. For example, the parent booklet might include a section on helping your child with their homework when you don’t know the language. The student booklet might include a section on common classroom phrases and key vocabulary in the target language. It could also include helpful hints from former students in immersion programs, such as having a list of the phone numbers of friends in the immersion class, on whom you can call if you have a problem with a homework task. In the case of young primary students, the booklet would be designed specifically for the parents.

Figure 4.3 gives an outline of the possible areas to be included in the information booklet.
1. Introduction
   • a brief description of and rationale for the program.

2. What will I/my child be doing this year?
   • a list of subjects and timetable if available.

3. How will the program work?
   • details on the orientation program, assessment,
     use of the target language, etc.

4. What can I expect in the first week?
   • exclusive use of the target language by the teacher.
   • feeling excited, tired, overwhelmed, etc.

5. What if I have problems?
   • description of possible problems and the strategies
     to be employed and/or people to contact for assistance.

6. What will the teachers expect of me?
   • recap of the content acceptance form/participation
     contract, expectations regarding L2 use by students, etc.

7. Will I be fluent by the end of the year?
   • benefits and possible outcomes of the immersion
     program.

8. Any other advice?
   • a list of useful phrases and vocabulary, learning how-to-learn
     strategies, helpful hints from previous students.


4.7 Step 7: What will we play?

This step refers to the syllabus design and materials development stage of the implementation process. As we stressed earlier, the course preparation for an immersion program is an enormous task. Ideally, the teachers involved will have the time to begin preparation for the immersion subjects in the year prior to the program’s implementation. The syllabus will need to be worked out before the beginning of the school year, but not all of the materials can be prepared so far in advance since they need to reflect the changing linguistic levels of the students and this is not always predictable. The same is true of the language-arts component of the course. A broad outline of the course can be made but much of the vocabulary and grammar knowledge to be taught and reinforced will come out of the content-based subjects and cannot be predicted with any reliability.

4.8 Step 8: Game preparations

The training and professional development of the teachers is a crucial step in the overall implementation plan. Obviously the immersion teachers will require specific training if they do not already have it and such training needs to occur as early as possible in the implementation process since they will need the knowledge and skills to design the course and prepare the materials.

The training for the immersion teachers may take various forms including postgraduate study, in-country experience, observation of an existing program or self-directed professional reading.

It is also worth considering offering or supporting language training in the L2 of the immersion program for any other interested staff. Such an initiative adds to the professional development of the relevant staff members, enables them to feel part of the immersion program and may allow them to give assistance to students involved in the program. Some schools also offer language lessons for parents, but this should be suggested cautiously for two reasons – one is
the extra workload on the LOTE staff, and second is the potential frustration of parents, who will not be able to acquire anywhere near as much of the LOTE via the drip feed approach as their children will in the immersion program.

4.9 Step 9: The third umpire

It is useful to appoint a steering committee to oversee the immersion program, at least in the first year or two. This body would comprise representatives of the key stakeholder groups; namely management, the LOTE department, the other immersion subject heads, other staff and parents. The presence of an outside consultant/expert is also useful.

The committee would have a number of functions:

- to monitor the implementation of the immersion program;
- to present and respond to feedback from the representative groups;
- to act as a decision-making body in relation to the contingency plan;
- to develop, oversee and respond to the evaluation of the program;
- to disseminate information about the program to relevant stakeholders.

The evaluation plan needs to be in place before the immersion program begins. The aims of the evaluation are determined first, followed by the appropriate data collection methods. One of the reasons for this, is that it may be necessary to undertake some pre-testing to measure such things as students’ proficiency levels or attitudes before being exposed to the immersion program.
4.10 Step 10: The supporters

The importance of regular feedback to parents and other members of staff not directly involved in the bilingual program is crucial. A regular bilingual program report in the school newsletter and at staff meetings is a simple way of keeping all members of the school community informed. Another parent information night early in the first term of the program is a useful way of bringing together all of the parents of children involved in the program and dealing with common issues in an expeditious manner. Interested parents might also be mobilised to form a bilingual support group which could organise fund-raising activities and assist the teachers in other practical ways.
References


Some non-paper resources

CPF Canadian Parents for French educational opportunities, a non-profit organization
  http://www.cpf.ca

CPF French Internet Addresses and Popular Software Lists
  http://members.shaw.ca/cpf99

CPF French Education Resources Quick Links
  http://members.shaw.ca/cpf99/CPF-Tables-of-Links.html

CARLA – the Center for Advanced Research in Language Acquisition
  at the University of Minnesota, hosts the American Council for Immersion Education’s pages. You can find articles from past issues of their newsletter at:

Some of the sections are:

- Immersion 101 discusses basic principles behind successful immersion programs
- Research Reports provides a summary of current studies in immersion education
- Best Practices identifies classroom techniques or school policies which are exemplary
- Techno Tips describes some kinds of technology that are used successfully in immersion programs
- Points for Parents is either written by a parent or for parents of immersion students
- School Profile highlights an immersion program with a description of the school and photos
• The Bridge: Research to Practice, is an insert for teachers that reviews research in a particular area of immersion education and then offers a lesson plan or detailed classroom activity that puts the research into practice (you may see past articles on the CARLA website at http://carla.acad.umn.edu/acie-bridges.html)

The May 2002 issue of the ACIE newsletter is a special issue on immersion education in Australia, guest edited by Michèle de Courcy.

Information about the Bilingual Schools Project in Victoria can be found at: http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/lote/lbil.htm

Videos

Immersion Teaching Practices, published by Michael Berthold for the University of Southern Queensland. He can be contacted at the Glennie School regarding its availability.


Growing Up With Language Plus published by the Language and Society Centre of Monash University and also available through Language Australia.

Some schools to ‘visit’

Camberwell Primary School French immersion program (primary) http://www.camberwellps.vic.edu.au/

