The restoration of bilingual education practices in the U.S. is often regarded as starting in 1963 in Florida. "In 1963, Cuban exiles established a dual-language (DL) school (Coral Way Elementary School) in Dade County, South Florida. Believing they were only in exile for a short period, the educated, middle-class Cubans set up this Spanish–English bilingual school" (Baker, 2001, p. 186).

Since then, the number of bilingual and DL programs in the U.S. has grown and the gift of bilingualism has been shared with minority-language speakers as well as native English speakers.

According to prominent researchers in the field, the loss of ethnic native languages—English monolingualism—prevents minority immigrant students from developing their full potential (Ovando, 2003) and traps them in a cycle of poverty and failure (Valdés, 1997).

Thus, immersion programs have become not only a resource for native language preservation but a tool to provide equity of education to minority and immigrant learners.

As asserted by Valdés (1997), it is important for dual-language educators to "make every effort to ensure that minority-language children are being exposed to the highest-quality instruction possible in their native language. [DL educators] must grapple with the conflicts engendered by the fact that they must educate two very different groups of children in the same language" (p. 416).

We share Valdés's (1997) concerns about how minority languages are taught in immersion programs, which often follow the instructional and theoretical approaches of the dominant culture—English, in this case. To advance the conversation around effective pedagogical practices in K-8 dual-immersion classrooms, we must ask: how does the synergy of theoretical, practical, and linguistic components impact professional development in K-8 dual-language programs?

Professional Development in K-8 Dual-Language Programs

Professional development has been previously identified as one of the essential factors that form the core criteria of successful DL programs (Toledo-López and Pentón Herrera, 2015a; Alanis and Rodriguez, 2008). However, as aptly stated by Korthagen (2017), a major challenge in teacher education and professional development has been "the problem of moving from intellectual understanding of the theory to enactment in practice" (p. 388). Paradoxically, this statement is also true when professional development programs overemphasize practice over theories. The incongruent harmony between theory and practice found in professional development has been identified as a gap that can hinder student outcomes (Timperley et al., 2007) and the design of high-quality programs that target the needs of diverse young learners (Buysee, Castro, and Peisner-Feinberg, 2010). This means that, for professional development to be effective, it is necessary to provide an adequate balance between theory and practice, while acknowledging and understanding the linguistic realities of the learners involved.

For professional development to be impactful in DL programs, three elements must be addressed in synergy: (1) theory, (2) practice, and (3) language, as represented in Figure 1. In the theoretical component, we focus on the three goals of dual language: (a) bilingualism and biliteracy, (b) grade-level academic achievement in both program languages, and (c) sociocultural competence (Medina, 2017). In the practical component, we explain the orthographic differences between Spanish and English that impact reading instruction. Lastly, the linguistic component addresses the importance of having students make cross-linguistic connections between the two program languages.

Theoretical Component: Three Goals

Without a clearly delineated language allocation plan that supports the three goals of DL education, it is difficult for students to reap the benefits of participating in such programs. A clear theoretical understanding of the research and pedagogical instructional best practices that align with the three goals is, thus, imperative.

Bilingualism and Biliteracy

Bilingualism is the ability emergent bilingual students have to speak, listen, and understand both program languages on a continuum. Historically, subtractive labels, such as limited English-proficient (LEP), have been used to describe students who are adding English to their linguistic repertoire while attending schools in the U.S. The term emergent bilinguals—used by most national organizations serving DL programs—adequately captures the additive nature of learning additional languages without the loss of home languages and cultures. Biliteracy, as an extension and deeper companion to...
bilingualism, goes beyond the listening and speaking language domains and includes the students' capacity to read and write in both program languages while also being able to translate from one to the other. Traditionally, bilingual education models viewed native languages as a vehicle to facilitate students' English acquisition, whereas with a focus on biliteracy, a bidirectional transfer and emphasis on cross-linguistic comparison serve to strengthen both program languages (Medina, 2018).

Grade-Level Academic Achievement in Both Program Languages
Instruction of emergent bilingual students in DL programs must be grounded in the standards used to meet district, state, and national expectations. However, students learning content through two languages must be able to meet all established benchmarks in both. It is not uncommon for DL educators to mistakenly focus on offering instruction in both English and Spanish only in core content areas (i.e., language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics). Nonetheless, best practices dictate that students must also meet grade-level expectations in special classes, to include physical education, music, and/or art. Additionally, special education services and/or gifted and talented support must be provided in both program languages (Howard et al., 2018; Kennedy and Medina, 2017). The language of instruction guides the language of support. For example, DL practitioners would not provide reading or dyslexia services in English when the student's instructional need is in Spanish.

Sociocultural Competence
Sociocultural competence is the ability to see the similarities and differences in each other but viewing that which is diverse as an asset and an opportunity to connect rather than an obstacle to overcome (Medina, 2018). DL stakeholders—including students, staff, district leadership, parents, and community members—engaging in self-reflection and dialogue about bias, privilege, discrimination, empathy, and equity are a nonnegotiable in DL programming. Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell (2011) describe this type of self-analysis and critical conversation in schools as a paradigm shift that allows individuals and organizations to effectively describe, respond to, and plan for issues that arise in diverse environments.

Without an explicit focus on sociocultural competence as a critical goal of DL education, emergent bilingual students will
not be exposed to divergent ideologies that
fortify their ability to positively interact with
and impact the globally community in which
they exist. Furthermore, DL stakeholders will
never fully embrace their duty as defenders
of equity and social justice (Medina, 2018).

Practical Component: Orthographic Differences and Reading Instruction
The three goals of DL programs provide the
theoretical foundation that drives the reading
instruction taking place in the biliteracy
classroom. Without a clear understanding of
the additive nature of the DL program model
and its desired outcomes, teachers risk facil­
itating instruction in Spanish that is guided
through an English-only, monolingual lens.
Therefore, it is imperative that DL educators
understand initial literacy in both Spanish
and English in the context of making the
connection between the two languages. The
three ways to create the additive nature of the
DL program model and its desired outcomes,
teachers risk facilitating instruction in Spanish
and English to successfully bridge theory into
practice (Toledo-López and Pentón Herrera,
2015b). Effective practical applications of
theory in DL education serve as a way to
provide biliteracy reading support that is
authentic to each of the two languages while
also creating connections between them.

Mora (2016) writes that, as a transparent
language, Spanish includes 27 letters that
represent 24 phonemes. English, on the oth­
er hand, is an opaque language that includes
between 40 and 52 phonemes produced by
26 alphabet letters. As explained by Mora
(2016), there are only five sounds produced
by the vowels in Spanish. The same is not
true for English, where the five vowels can re­
sult in 15 vowel sounds and thus add to the
murky nature of the language. This linguistic
variation impacts the way in which lessons
need to be planned and facilitated. For
example, in Spanish, the majority of words
are easily decodable because of the focus on
regular syllabic rules, while in English a focus
on initial consonant sound is most common
in initial literacy practices (Morris and Rosado,
2013).

The synergy between theory and prac­
tice is solidified via the language instruction
that takes place in the DL classroom. The
contrastive analysis of the two program
languages serves to remind DL educators
that some imperative practices to support
initial literacy in English are not needed in
Spanish. As an example, word walls are used
in most U.S. classrooms, including those in
DL programs. However, because of the
transparency of the Spanish language, a
traditional word wall focusing on initial
consonant sound does not fully support initial
literacy in Spanish. Instead, environmental
print or anchor chart support should target
syllabic work or tricky letters—letras trampo­sas, in Spanish—like the silent h, b/v, c/s/z,
or c/k/q (Beeman and Urow, 2013).

Other practices that are English
focused but are commonly incorporat­
ed in DL classrooms where Spanish is the
language of instruction include sight
words, onset-rime, and guided reading.
In learning to read in English, sight words
are extremely useful for fluidity and com­
prehension. Rhyming words in English, such
as top, hop, and cop, are imperative because
students are able to generate and learn word
families. In Spanish, because words are easily
decodable, these practices are not needed
(Mora, 2016). Guided reading is also an
instructional practice that is used in most DL
programs, even though it is not a pedagog­
ical strategy used in initial Spanish literacy.

Language biliteracy instruction that is
grounded in the three goals of DL and also
in the practitioner implementation of reading
pedagogical strategies that are authentic to
each of the program languages must include
student understanding of the similarities and
differences between English and Spanish lit­
teracy components. Beeman and Urow (2013)
define the “bridge” as the planned and es­
sential moment when teachers and students
engage in the contrastive linguistic comparison
that brings content and language together.
In this way, students explicitly transfer what
is learned in English to Spanish and vice
versa, eliminating the need for DL teachers
to reteach content. The authors add that
during this important instructional moment,
students may compare and contrast Spanish
and English phonology, morphology, syntax
and grammar, and pragmatics.

In bilingual education programs, teach­
ers have been historically encouraged to
strictly separate the two languages, but in
biliteracy classroom settings, cross-linguistic
connections are imperative as a means to
achieve the outcomes promised through
DL programming. The three ways to create
a bridge include side-by-side, illustration or
diagram, and así se dice—“this is how you
say it,” in English (Beeman and Urow, 2013).
A side-by-side anchor chart brings together
content vocabulary, cognates, or phrases in
both languages that provide linguistic sup­
port for emergent bilingual students.

An illustration or diagram that is labeled
in both program languages is the second
type of bridge that can be used to further
cross-linguistic connections in the biliteracy
classroom. Finally, the third type of bridge, adapted from Kathy Escamilla's work at the Bueno Center, is as si se dice (see Escamilla et al., 2013). Students, with teacher support, select a piece of writing in either program language and, through a series of structured steps, paraphrase through translation. As this process occurs, the contrastive analysis takes place by comparing and contrasting the identified linguistic elements, strengthening the emergent bilingual students' ability to fully utilize their entire linguistic repertoires.

Final Thoughts
Different to monolingual programs, DL instruction focuses on developing the learners' interpersonal and academic vocabulary in English and in the target language, while also ensuring academic content knowledge and competency in both. Thus, impactful professional development in DL education becomes not only a need but a foundation that ensures successful implementation and practice.

Historically, professional development has been offered through a subtractive and monolingual lens where the goal is to transition students to English-only instruction. For DL professional development to be successful, it needs to be conceived, planned, and facilitated with a biliteracy and bilingual focus in mind. If DL educators are tasked with establishing and maintaining appropriate and effective didactic approaches to teach literacy to emergent bilingual learners, then the professional support provided to them must align with those goals. However, this can only be accomplished with continuous guidance and meaningful training that addresses best current practices in the field. It is our hope that literacy coaches, DL educators, and DL stakeholders—at all levels—find tools that will help them advance their programs by considering the specificities of initial literacy acquisition in both languages.

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