

Guiding Questions

Dual language in higher education: Assessing student success and student experiences

Christoffersen, K., Ortín, R., García, D. L., Lu, M. T., & Cavazos, J. (2025). Dual language in higher education: Assessing student success and student experiences. *Foreign Language Annals*, 58, 916–940. <https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.70040>

1. Background: DL Education And Related Programs In Higher Education

Christoffersen et al. situate their study within a higher education landscape that is largely shaped by English-only norms, declining language enrollments, and the removal of language requirements.

How do these structural conditions shape the possibilities—and limitations—of implementing dual language (DL) models at universities? In what ways might DL challenge dominant ideologies about language, rigor, and academic legitimacy in higher education?

The authors frame DL in higher education as conceptually connected to K–12 dual language programs, heritage language education, FLAS coursework, and study abroad.

What similarities and differences stand out to you across these contexts in terms of goals, student populations, and institutional support?

2. Findings: Student Success Outcomes (GPA, Retention, Time to Degree)

3. Findings: Student Perceptions, Identity, and Belonging

Qualitative data highlight themes of identity affirmation, cultural connection, and belonging, particularly for students with Spanish-speaking backgrounds.

How do these findings extend or deepen existing research on heritage language learners and culturally sustaining pedagogy? In what ways do students' narratives challenge deficit-based views of bilingualism in higher education?

Several students described DL courses as affecting their confidence and ability to use Spanish in academic, professional, and personal contexts.

How do these affective and experiential outcomes fit into broader definitions of “student success” in higher education? What outcomes tend to be valued—or overlooked—by institutions?

4. Implications: Servingness, Equity, and Institutional Change

Drawing on the concept of “servingness” at Hispanic-Serving Institutions, the authors argue that DL programs can move institutions beyond symbolic inclusion toward more meaningful support of students’ linguistic resources.

How does this study contribute to conversations about equity and inclusion in higher education language policy and practice?

If a university were considering adopting or expanding DL offerings, what evidence from this study would be most compelling for administrators? What concerns or questions might still remain, particularly in non-HSI contexts?