

# **MANDARIN DUAL IMMERSION** **AT TARWATER ELEMENTARY**

*"Monolingualism, is the illiteracy of the 21st century."*

- Gregg Roberts, Language-Immersion Specialist, Utah State Office of Education

In today's world, increased conversations about globalization permeate the work force. Dual language immersion education is taking center stage as the most effective and efficient program for preparing linguistically and culturally competent students who can successfully compete in a complex global economy. To achieve this goal for Tarwater students, the Chinese Dual Immersion curriculum model engages students in two different languages throughout their elementary school learning experience: Mandarin Chinese and English. In order to maximize proficiency in writing, reading and speaking of the second language, the plan will be to offer the Mandarin language acquisition program at Bogle Junior High and Hamilton High School as well. Hamilton currently has a Mandarin language program and the expansion implementation planning would begin at the junior high level when we move our first group of students into the 5th grade.

## **Why Chinese?**

Chinese is spoken by one-fifth of the world's population - ranked #1 among first languages spoken. Since China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, both our State and Federal government have made Chinese language and culture an important educational investment.

The growing economic presence of China will only make it more of a factor in commerce. Currently, China holds the largest portion of American debt and is quickly becoming one of the world's economic superpowers. Many Chandler businesses regularly conduct business with Chinese-based companies. Tarwater's location proximity to ASU and firms located along the Price Road Technology/Business Corridor would make Tarwater the prime location for the pilot program.

## **Why Begin a Second Language in Kindergarten?**

The young child's brain is developmentally ready to learn language. A child has twice as many synapses (connections) in the brain as an adult. The young brain must use these connections or lose them. There is a window of opportunity in which a child learns a first language normally. After this period, the brain becomes slowly less receptive. Young children can learn as many spoken languages as you can allow them to hear systematically and regularly at the same time. Children just have this capacity. When children wait until high school to start studying a foreign language, the job is much harder.

## **Why is CUSD Choosing Immersion?**

There is no other type of instruction, short of living in a second-language environment, that is as successful as a dual immersion program to help students attain high levels of second language proficiency and well-developed cultural skills, while maximizing their achievement in their primary language. The cognitive, socio-cultural, and economic benefits are great. Young children especially thrive in this type of instructional environment. Economically, the Chinese dual immersion model is also the least expensive and most sustainable way to deliver second

language instruction. The reason is simple: Chinese dual immersion teachers are hired by schools as regular elementary teachers who also happen to speak and teach in Chinese, and at no additional personnel cost to the school. There are costs associated with certifying, and integrating the Chinese staff into the school and community. They are permanent and critical members of the school's faculty, just like their English-speaking partner teachers. Together, this powerful team offers a high quality education to Chinese dual immersion students.

Language immersion is an approach to second language instruction in which the usual learning activities are conducted in a second language. This means that the new language is the medium of instruction as well as the object of instruction. Immersion classes follow the same curricula, and in some instances, use the same materials (translated into the target language) as those used in the non-immersion schools of their district. The goal of the language immersion classroom is language acquisition.

In the early years, immersion teachers realize that students will not understand everything they say. Teachers use body language, visuals, manipulatives, exaggerated facial expressions, and expressive intonation to communicate meaning. In kindergarten, it is common for students to speak English with each other and when responding to their teacher. As the years progress, students naturally use more of the immersion language. (Fortune and Tedick, 2003)

According to the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA), at the University of Minnesota, immersion programs are the most effective type of foreign language program. Students can be expected to reach higher levels of second language proficiency than students in other school-based language programs.

A great deal of research has centered on second language acquisition in various school settings. Over the past thirty years, due in large part to the success of immersion programs, there has been a shift away from teaching language in isolation and toward integrating language and content. This shift is based on four principles:

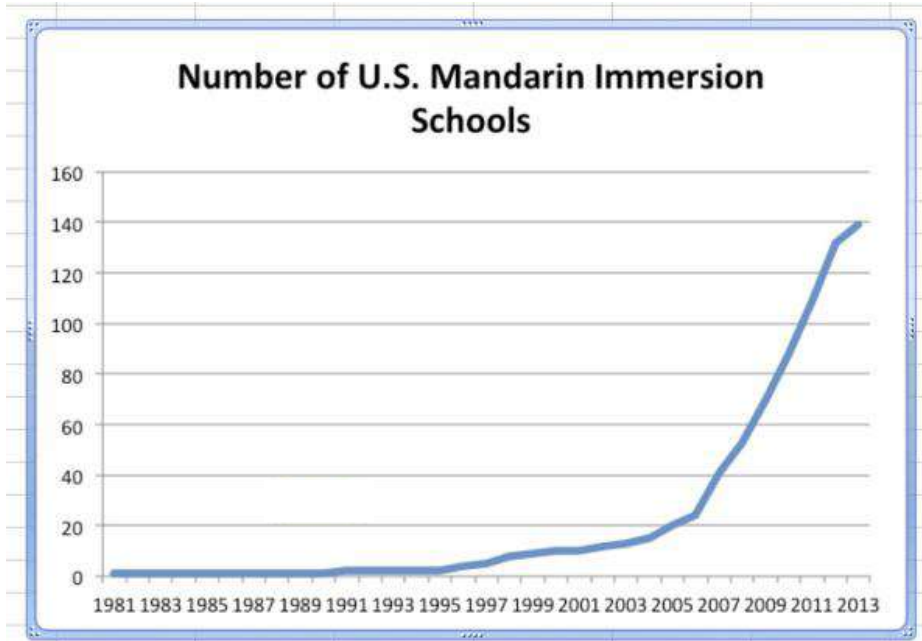
- Language is acquired most effectively when it is learned in a meaningful social context. For young learners, the school curriculum provides a natural basis for second language learning, offering them the opportunity to communicate about what they know and what they want to know, as well as about their feelings and attitudes.
- Important and interesting content provides a motivating context for learning the communicative functions of the new language. Young children are not interested in learning language that serves no meaningful function.
- First language acquisition, cognition and social awareness go hand in hand in young children. By integrating language and content, second language learning, too, becomes an integral part of a child's social and cognitive development.

Formal and functional characteristics of language change from one context to another. An integrated language and content model in an elementary school setting provides a wide variety of contexts in which to use the second language. Immersion students typically develop greater cognitive flexibility, demonstrating increased attention control, better memory, and superior

problem solving skills as well as an enhanced understanding of their primary language. Current research shows that being bilingual boosts brainpower.

**Is Language Immersion a New Concept?**

Immersion has been used in Canada for over 35 years. Immersion schools in the United States are gaining popularity as an effective method of language learning. In reality the immersion concept has been around for thousands of years since it is the way all of us learn our native language. In immersion, language learning is done in such a natural way that students are comfortable with the instruction. Children are excellent mimics. They are eager, curious and less self-conscious than adults in experimenting with and acquiring new languages. In the graph and table below, you can see the expansion of Mandarin dual immersion programs across the United States.



<b>Year</b>	<b>New schools</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2006-2007</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>2007-2008</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>2011-2012</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>2012-2013</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>129</b>

In Utah, elementary-school students are studying, singing, reading and fluently speaking in languages not their own: French, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese and Portuguese. They are part of one of the most ambitious total-immersion language-education programs ever attempted in the United States. The state implemented dual immersion programs in the 2009 school year with 1,400 students in 25 schools and by this fall will include 20,000 kids in 100 schools--or 20% of all the elementary schools in the state, with nearly 95% of school districts participating up through grade 12. Competition for spots in the program is keen: families apply online before kids enter kindergarten or first grade--depending on the school district--and the ones who will participate are picked by lottery. Those who are chosen take half their subjects each day in the new language and the other half in English. This is the same 50/50 percentage model we would like to implement at Tarwater.

### **Is Immersion a Realistic Option for All Children?**

The immersion program is open to all children entering kindergarten at Tarwater. Families who value proficiency in a second language acquired during elementary school are encouraged to enroll in the immersion program. Enough spaces will be held for Tarwater attendance boundary and open enrollment students to fill two kindergarten dual immersion classrooms.

We will be very focused on integrating this program into the current culture of our school community. As we have a very well established school culture and set of traditions, careful attention will be placed on making our dual immersion program a welcome addition to the school, not the center of it. Our school philosophy is one that believes in thoughtful and respectful implementation plans over longer periods of time. Our DataWise plans focusing on improving our instruction in math problem-solving and the use of Thinking Maps to teach informational text or our Leveled Literacy Intervention Tier 2 programs are strong illustrations of taking an outside program, and/or set of strategies, and integrating them into our current instructional culture.

Immersion is not for everyone, however. Many parents want children to master the English language before learning a second language. Many students don't have a passion for language; their passions lie elsewhere. There will be students who want to study French, German, Japanese who will wait until middle school or high school to begin a language.

Parents know that each child is unique, and children develop talents in many areas: music, language, numbers, visual arts, movement, science, and social intelligence. Language is only one of the Multiple Intelligences human beings possess. At Tarwater, there are many paths to excel, wherever a student's talents and academic interests lie. Parents are encouraged to focus on the educational program that will be a good fit for their child. No matter what choice they make, it is a good choice if that choice is based on the temperament, learning style and other needs of each child. Each child will benefit from the Chandler Unified School District's excellent teachers in all of its many educational programs.

### **Is a Background in the New Language Needed?**

The school will be designed for children of families who do not speak Mandarin Chinese. Teachers consider this fact when they communicate with parents and assign homework. Communication between home and school is in English.

### **What percentage of class time would you say is expected to be in the Mandarin Chinese language?**

In the kindergarten program, teaching in the classroom is 50% in the second language. Students will naturally ask questions in English, but teachers will most often respond in the second language (with many gestures, pictures, and visual cues). At every grade level, students have the normal specials schedule that include, music, physical education, technology and media center time with specialists in those areas; specials are taught in English.

### **How do Children Learn English along with Mandarin?**

Throughout kindergarten, and into sixth grade, the dual immersion instruction will take place in a 50/50% - Mandarin/English daily instructional format. Students may use English during their Mandarin instructional time, but their classroom teachers will respond in Mandarin. As students become more accustomed to hearing and understanding the Mandarin language, they are encouraged to express themselves in Mandarin. Direct instruction in Mandarin/English and reading strategies begin in Kindergarten. Students work on spelling rules, parts of speech and writing skills in both languages.

### **Will Elementary Language Immersion Classrooms be Using the Same Curricula as English-Only Classes?**

Yes. Immersion classrooms will be held to the same content standards as the other classrooms, learning the same science, math, social studies and reading lessons; however, social studies and science will be taught in the second language. Specials (such as music, art, physical education, and media center) will be taught in English. Year-end tests given to students in immersion programs, to judge performance in English language skills, and quarterly tests given in Math have shown that Chinese dual immersion students regularly test at least as well as or better than their non-immersion peer students throughout all of Chinese dual immersion programs. It's remarkable to see how well the students can understand core content instruction delivered in Chinese, and the proof is in their benchmark scores. We are, and will continue to, evaluate the content standards that will be taught to the children using the Mandarin language. The final decision for the content standards will be made within the 2013-14 planning phase after our continued research of what other successful dual immersion programs are using within the Mandarin program.

### **Long-Term Effects of Immersion Education?**

A growing body of research on immersion education has shown that immersion students consistently meet or exceed academic expectations in the following areas:

- **Second language skills:** Immersion students by far outperform students in traditional foreign language classes. They are functionally proficient in the immersion language and are able to communicate according to their age and grade level.
- **English language skills:** In the early years of English instruction (K-2), there may be a lag in English reading and writing skills. By 5th grade, however, immersion students do as well or better than students in English-only classes.

- Content areas: Immersion students achieve in academic areas as well as students in English-only programs.
- Cultural sensitivity: Immersion students are more aware of and show positive attitudes towards other cultures. A survey of top international business executives done by the Center for Applied Second Language Studies at the University of Oregon in 2007 showed that multinational businesses are looking for potential high-level employees with cultural sensitivities and the skill to perform in a foreign environment. “What really counts for multinational businesses is employees’ ability to effectively communicate in a variety of cultures and contexts. Bilingual employees are valuable, not only for their language skills, but also for their ability to interact effectively with people around the world in either their first or second language.”
- Research is increasingly showing that the brains of people who know two or more languages are different from those who know just one--and those differences are all for the better. Multilingual people, studies show, are better at reasoning, at multitasking, at grasping and reconciling conflicting ideas. They work faster and expend less energy doing so, and as they age, they retain their cognitive faculties longer, delaying the onset of dementia and even full-blown Alzheimer's disease.

### **Immersion at Tarwater Elementary, and in Hamilton High School Feeder Region**

As stated earlier, the Tarwater Elementary Language Immersion Model will be a unique program in the Chandler Unified School District, as a school-within-a-school option. The program will begin in 2014-15 with two kindergarten classrooms and will add another grade level with each successive year through sixth grade. The program goal will be that our immersion students will successfully progress through twelfth grade Hamilton High School, and the Chandler Unified School District is committed to supporting world language growth through graduation.

Families who enroll their children in kindergarten are asked to make at least a seven-year commitment to the immersion program.

At grade 7, students move to a middle school where students transition to partial immersion. Instruction in the second language will occur in the students’ social studies and world language classes at junior high school. The rest of the junior school class instruction will be in English.

At grade 9 students will have a very strong foundation in the second language class and will have likely have one class in their target language, with the rest in English. We anticipate that many students who stay with Chinese through high school will also graduate with significant progress toward an undergraduate minor in Chinese at ASU as well as at several western area colleges and universities.

### **Key Components of the Elementary Program**

- The second language is the language of instruction for 50% of all classroom instruction in kindergarten through grade 6.
- The curriculum parallels the district curriculum in all subjects. Students will be taught to read, speak and learn in the second language.
- Students will continue to be taught the other subjects in the second language through 6th grade.

- After two or three years in an immersion program, students demonstrate fluency and their comprehension skills are comparable to those of native speakers the same age.
- Research, however, has found that immersion students' second language lacks the same grammatical accuracy, variety and complexity produced by native speakers. To attain that skill level is a long-term process. Native-like proficiency in every skill area is unlikely.

### **Long Term Benefits**

- Immersion students are better prepared for the global community and job markets where a second language is an asset. China has both the world's quickest growing economy and the largest population. More people speak Mandarin Chinese than any other language on the earth. It is difficult to see an American future isolated from Chinese influence. Why not give our children an increased opportunity to compete in this drastically evolving economic and cultural landscape?

## **ENROLLMENT IN THE IMMERSION PROGRAM**

### **Would the Kindergarten Immersion be a Full-Day Program?**

The Tarwater Immersion Program will be a full-day option only program due to the 50/50% Mandarin/English split day instructional format.

### **Is the Program Open to All Kindergarten Students?**

Yes. Generally, any kindergarten child whose family values learning a second language may enroll in the program. The immersion programs will be designed for students to develop proficiency in a second language and not for students who are already fluent in one of the immersion languages. All students are eligible to participate, but students with language processing disabilities are less likely to be successful in a second language and an immersion program may be inappropriate for those students.

### **If the Child Didn't Enroll in Kindergarten, Could He/She Be Enrolled Later, Perhaps in First or Second Grade?**

Entrance to the immersion program is generally restricted to those who enter in the beginning of the program at kindergarten. However, students may enter in later grades provided they meet specific standards and pass appropriate assessments demonstrating appropriate proficiency in the second language. For example, students who transfer into the District from another immersion program should have the appropriate language proficiency to enter in an upper grade; however, an immersion setting would not be as effective for a 3rd grader who has never had any education in the second language.

### **How Many Students Would Be Enrolled in Language Immersion?**

We would have a capacity of 50-52 students in the two classrooms.

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### **What Role do Parents Play in the Classroom/School?**

A long-term commitment is essential for children to experience the great benefits an immersion education yields. Parents can support their child in these ways:

- Make a long-term commitment to immersion.
- Develop an understanding of immersion education.
- Provide experiences outside of school to develop English language skills.
- Encourage the use of the second language outside of school.
- Most importantly, be sure your child attends school every day.
- Volunteer at school and in your child's classroom.

Various volunteer opportunities will exist in the program, just like the normal English-only classroom experiences. Parent involvement in school activities shows the child that education is very important to the family. Outside of school, parents are asked to read to or with their child every day in English, which is the same advice given to non-immersion students' families. At every grade level, reading to and with the child at home is imperative for the child's language development.

### **IMMERSION TEACHING PERSONNEL**

#### **Are Teachers Native Speakers?**

Some immersion teachers may be native speakers, although this is not a requirement. Teachers must have a Tarwater Elementary Mandarin teachers must obtain an Arizona teaching license and be highly proficient in the language of instruction. Tarwater Mandarin teachers have traveled or lived abroad and have an excellent understanding of other cultures and the value of global education.

#### **Will We Require Elementary Language Immersion Teachers to have a Certificate in Language Immersion Education?**

Language immersion teachers will have to be certified in elementary education and also demonstrate a high level of proficiency in the second language.

#### **Will there be Student Exchanges through the Language Immersion Program?**

Student exchanges may develop in the future; but they are not included in the first year of the proposal. However, with the growing number of immersion programs throughout Arizona and United States, opportunities for local exchanges are developing.

#### **In the Elementary Language Immersion Program has Thought Been Given as to how Culture will be Integrated into Language Learning?**

Culture will be an important part of the immersion classroom. Teachers may incorporate culture into lessons, activities, classroom artifacts, and by bringing in classroom guests. Our Community Education is currently working at securing a variety of vendors who have expertise in Chinese culture, language and art. All Tarwater students will have the opportunity to participate in these after-school clubs and classes.



## **What Is a “Critical” Language, and Why Is Mandarin Considered to be One?**

The U.S. Government has designated all Flagship-supported languages as “critical languages” because the national need for trained speakers in those languages exceeds the number of bilingual speakers available. These languages are also critical for U.S. national security and economic competitiveness. The perception that these languages are too complex and difficult to learn for most English-speakers has resulted in too few critical language speakers. Flagship programs are intended to change that perception. Although these languages can be more challenging and take longer to learn, they are not harder. The Language Flagship has proven that Flagship languages can be learned by English-speakers to the professional level.

**1. Arabic** is the official language of over 20 countries and it has well nearly 300 million native speakers. These speakers are largely concentrated in North Africa and the Middle East, but there are minority groups of native speakers throughout the world. It is an official language of the United Nations, the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Conference, and the African Union. There is a demand for Arabic linguists in the government, consular services, international NGOs, media and business.

**2. Chinese (Mandarin)** is spoken by over one billion people around the world, roughly ninety percent of those are in Mainland China, Taiwan, Singapore, and in the Southeast Asian countries. About 70 percent of Chinese people speak Mandarin. The long-term strategic importance of U.S.-China cooperation ensures that this language will remain critical for business and government for the foreseeable future, and career opportunities for Chinese linguists can be found in almost any field.

### **Arizona State University (Flagship Language University and Tarwater Implementation Partner)**

*The ASU Chinese Language Flagship is an undergraduate program designed for Mandarin language learners who seek to achieve superior language proficiency while pursuing degrees in the academic major of their choice. This multi-year curriculum is designed to produce graduates with dual strengths in professional-level Mandarin language proficiency and their chosen career domains.*

**Features of the Program:** *Undergraduate content courses taught in Chinese, one-on-one mentoring with Chinese graduate students, direct enrollment at the prestigious Nanjing University, and internships tailored to student interests.*

**3. Hindi and Urdu** are spoken by around 250 million people as a first language, and over 200 million people as a second language. While Hindi and Urdu may be considered separate languages, they are also considered varieties of the same language. Hindi and Urdu came from the same root language, and share the same grammar and much basic vocabulary. Following the partition of India in 1947, Urdu became the national language of Pakistan and Hindi the official language of India. Both of these nations are important as global nuclear powers, strategic allies, and as growing trade partners.

**4. Korean** is spoken by more than 75 million people living on the Korean peninsula. Korean is the official language of both South Korea and North Korea. Outside of the Korean peninsula, there are about two million people in China who speak Korean as their first language, another

two million in the U.S., 700,000 in Japan, and 500,000 in the Russian regions of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Although relatively small, Korea's influence on the rest of the world is likely to grow because of its dynamic economy and strong relationship with China.

**5. Persian** is an important language of the Middle East and Central Asia. It is known as Farsi in Iran, Dari in Afghanistan and Tajik in Tajikistan. It has about 62 million native speakers, ranking it among the world's 20 most widely spoken first languages; another 50 million or more speak it as a second language. The critical need for this language stems from the region's strategic importance and the challenge of improving U.S.-Iranian relations. Some jobs available to Americans who study Farsi include the government sector, journalism, and political analysis ("think tanks").

**6. Portuguese** is the official language of Portugal, Brazil, Mozambique, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and Principe. With over 200 million speakers, Portuguese is the 3rd most spoken language in the western hemisphere, and the most spoken language in the southern hemisphere. Characterized by large and well-developed agricultural, manufacturing, and service sectors, Brazil's economy is larger than all other South American countries, and Brazil is rapidly expanding its presence in world markets. an important language of the Middle East and Central Asia.

**7. Russian** is spoken not only in Russia, but all over Central Asia and in many parts of Eastern Europe. Russian is the eighth most widely spoken native language, with over 150 million first-language speakers. About 110 million people speak it as a second language. There are commercial opportunities emerging from the expanding Russian economy, including U.S. firms doing business in Russia, as well as the newly established Russian firms doing business in the U.S. All this has created an expansion of job opportunities for those who possess Russian language skills. Other career opportunities exist in government agencies, such as the State Department, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Defense.

**8. Swahili** is a language that linguistically unites between 30 and 50 million people in 10 East African countries. It is the official language of Kenya and Tanzania, and serves as the first language of roughly five million people. As the lingua franca (a common language used by speakers of different languages) for much of East Africa, Swahili holds strategic importance for engagement across Africa.

**9. Turkish** is spoken by over 70 million people as a native language, and 15 million more speak this language globally – making it one of the globe's 15 most widely spoken first languages. Turkey is connected, geographically and culturally, to Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Middle East, making the Turkish language advantageous to anyone interested in the international business or politics of those regions. Likewise, for students pursuing careers in business or government service, opportunities will only continue to increase as Turkey continues to develop as a global economic power.

For Further Information:

ASU Confucius Institute

<http://confuciusinstitute.asu.edu/portal/>

Mandarin Immersion Parent Council

<http://miparentscouncil.org>

Utah's Chinese Dual Immersion

<http://utahchineseimmersion.org/about/immersion-model/>

University of Minnesota Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA)

<http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/index.html>

Minnesota Advocates for Immersion Network

<http://www.mnimmersion.org>

Minnetonka Language Immersion Model

<http://www.minnetonka.k12.mn.us/immersion>

Sunrise Drive Elementary School (Catalina Foothills, Tucson)

<https://sites.google.com/a/cfsd16.org/mandarin/welcome>

Chinese Immersion at Catalina Foothills School District

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DT-AwcDfYE4>

Chinese Flagship (BYU)

<http://chineseflagship.byu.edu/chineseflagship/index.html>