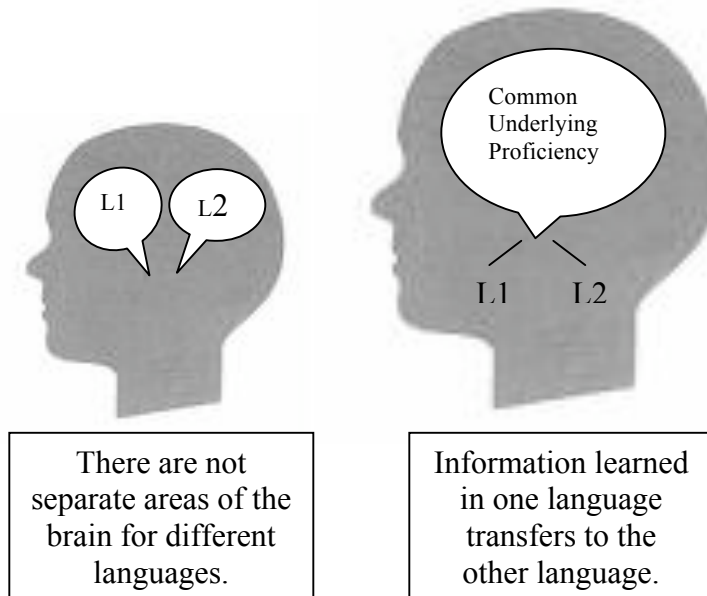


# Dual Language Weekly Focus

## How L1 supports L2 Development

Contrary to reason, the stronger that students' native language is developed, the easier it is to speak, read, hear and write another language. The transfer that occurs is counterintuitive, but very well documented. Dr. Jim Cummins explained this phenomenon in his keynote address at the National Association for Bilingual Educators Dual Language Pre-Conference session on February 6, 2008.

First language learning (L1) and second language learning (L2) occurs in the same part of the brain. If it occurred in separate areas of the brain we would not have access to the information we use in one language. For example, a group of Spanish speakers eating lunch together are approached by someone that does not speak Spanish and switch to a conversation in English or any other language. The Spanish speakers continue to have full remembrance of the topic they were just discussing in Spanish. The same idea occurs in students that are learning content in Spanish, when they learn the vocabulary and syntax of the English language, the knowledge they have from content instruction in L1 will transfer.



The transfer is aided by quality instruction that helps students make connections to their background knowledge. Content in the second language must also be taught in a comprehensible manner that is highly contextual and relevant to the students. Through Dual Language, students' second language acquisition is based on content instruction and is supported by the learning that occurs in their native language.