No Program Is an Island: Policy Contexts for Immersion Education

CAL CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS
Improving communication through better understanding of language and culture

Donna Christian

October 19, 2012

Fourth International Conference on Language Immersion Education

Immersion 2012: Bridging Contexts for a Multilingual World

CARLA CENTER FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

No Program Is an Island

No man is an island, entire of itself.

Each is a piece of the continent, a part of the main…

John Donne, 1623, Meditation XVII

No {program} is an island, entire of itself

Each is a piece of the {school, district, community, state, nation, international environment} a part of the main
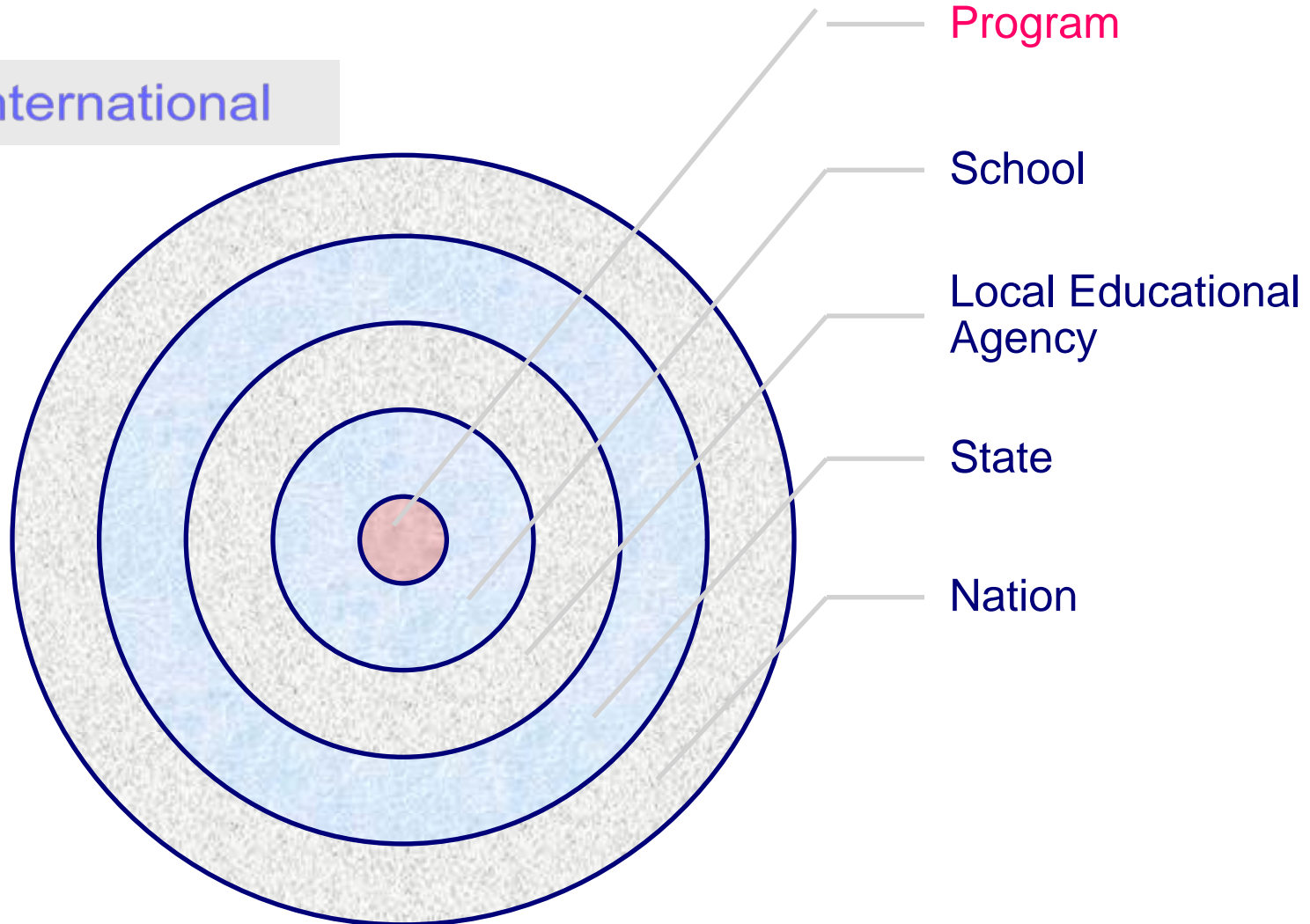
External Influences on Immersion Programs

▸ **Multiple policy contexts/sources**

▸ **Sociolinguistic reality – "superdiversity"**

▸ **Language policies**

▸ **Education policies**

▸ **Ideologies**

  – "Why are facts so useless in this discussion?" (Fishman, 2008)

  – "When research results are countered with findings from another study, policymakers, the press, and the attentive public tend to fall back on their ideology, interests, and biases instead of trying to sort out the competing claims of researchers… (Greene, 1998)
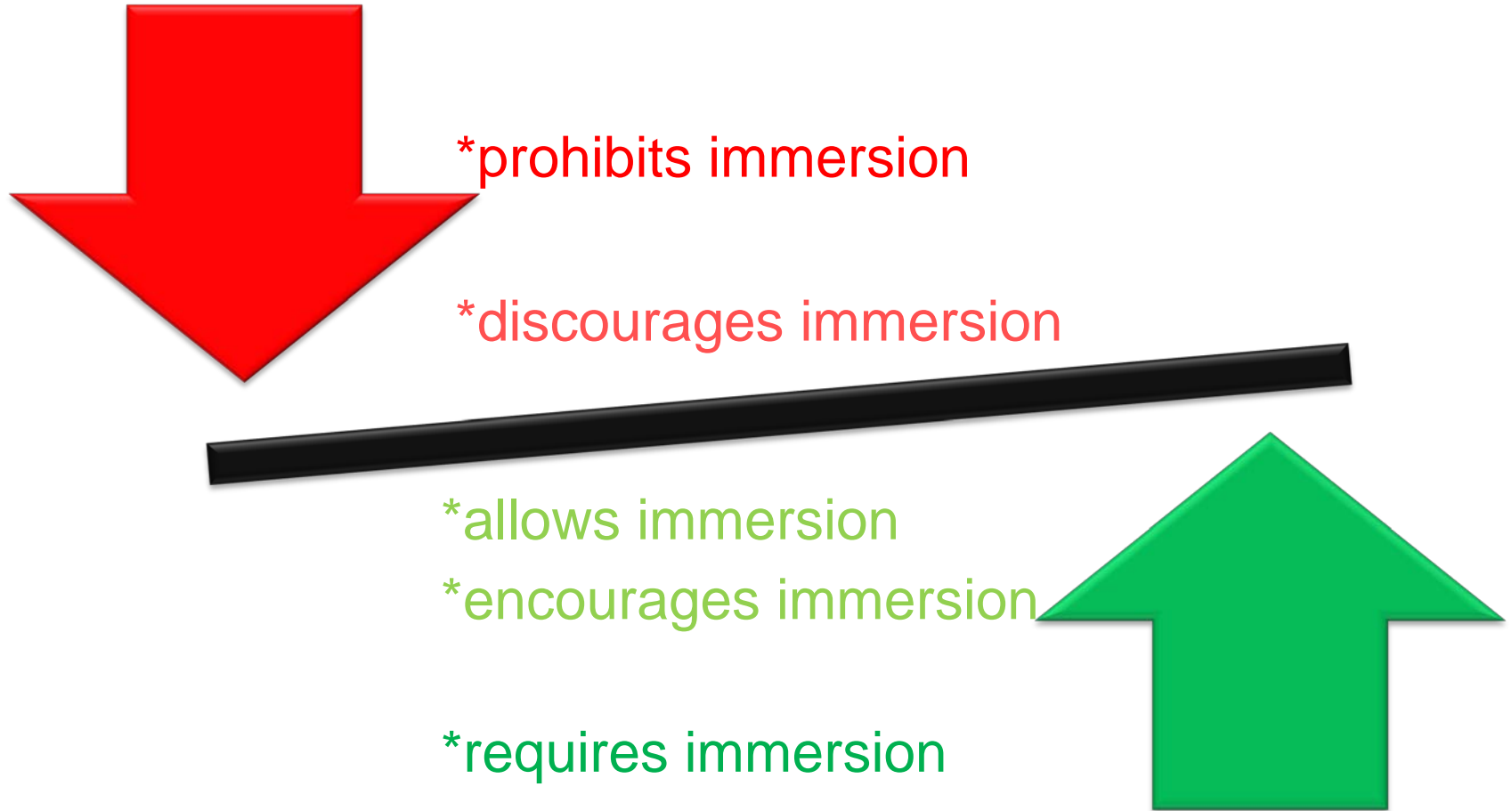
Overview

▸ Growth and evolution of immersion education in various policy contexts since its modern beginnings

▸ "Implementation spaces" made available for local programs in different policy environments and how implementers have worked within them or worked to change them

▸ Promising strategies (and some challenges)

Policy Contexts by Scope

International

Program

School

Local Educational Agency

State

Nation

Impact of Policy on Implementation Spaces

*prohibits immersion

*discourages immersion

*allows immersion
*encourages immersion

*requires immersion

Roots of Immersion

"…on returning from a visit to the St. Lambert French immersion program and after extended consultation with students, parents, teachers, school officials, and McGill University participants in that program, [I] approached Culver City, CA Unified School District authorities to suggest the possible replication, with only minor modifications, of the St. Lambert program in an American setting."
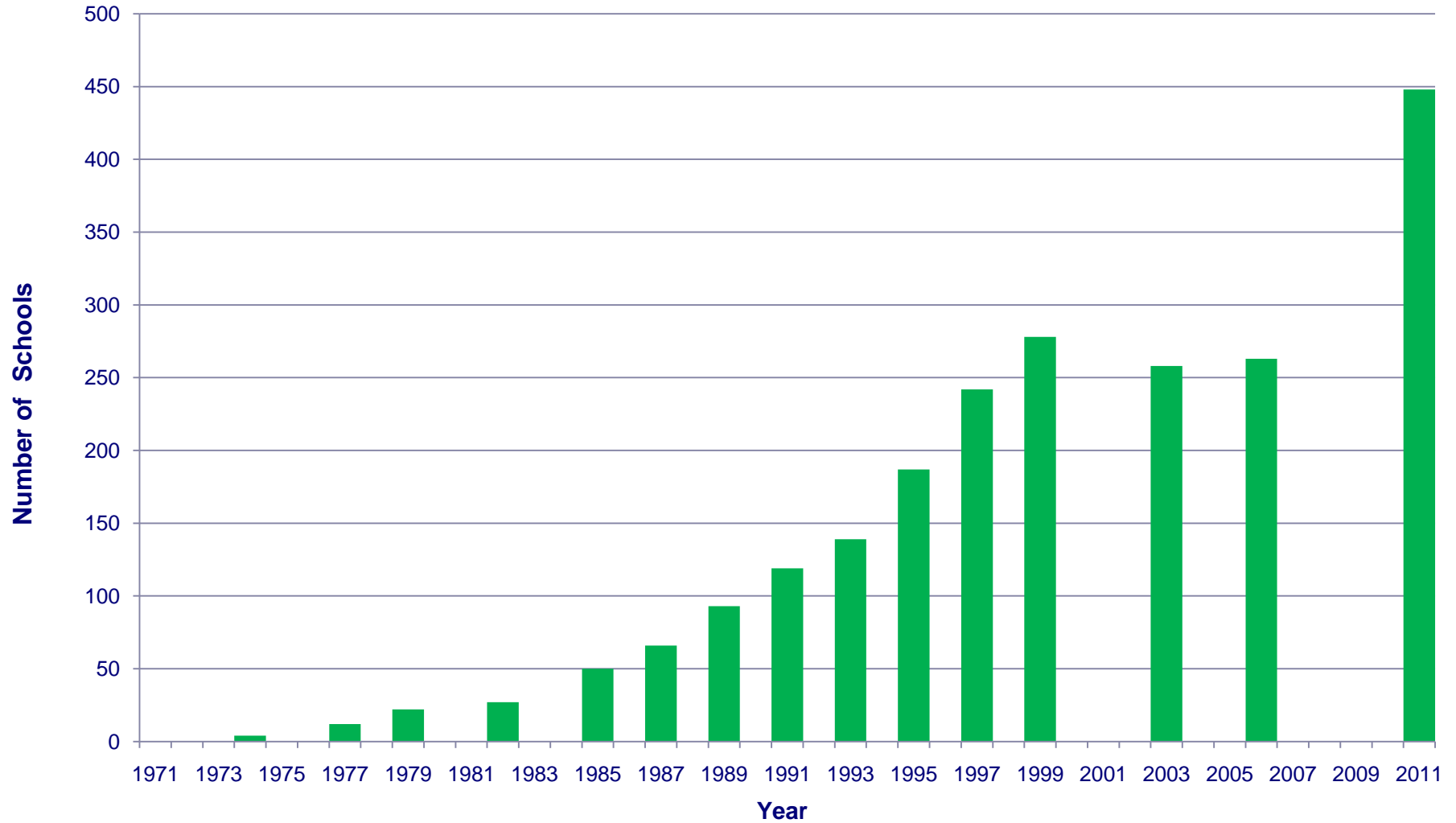
Campbell (1984)

Culver City Immersion – 40 Years Later

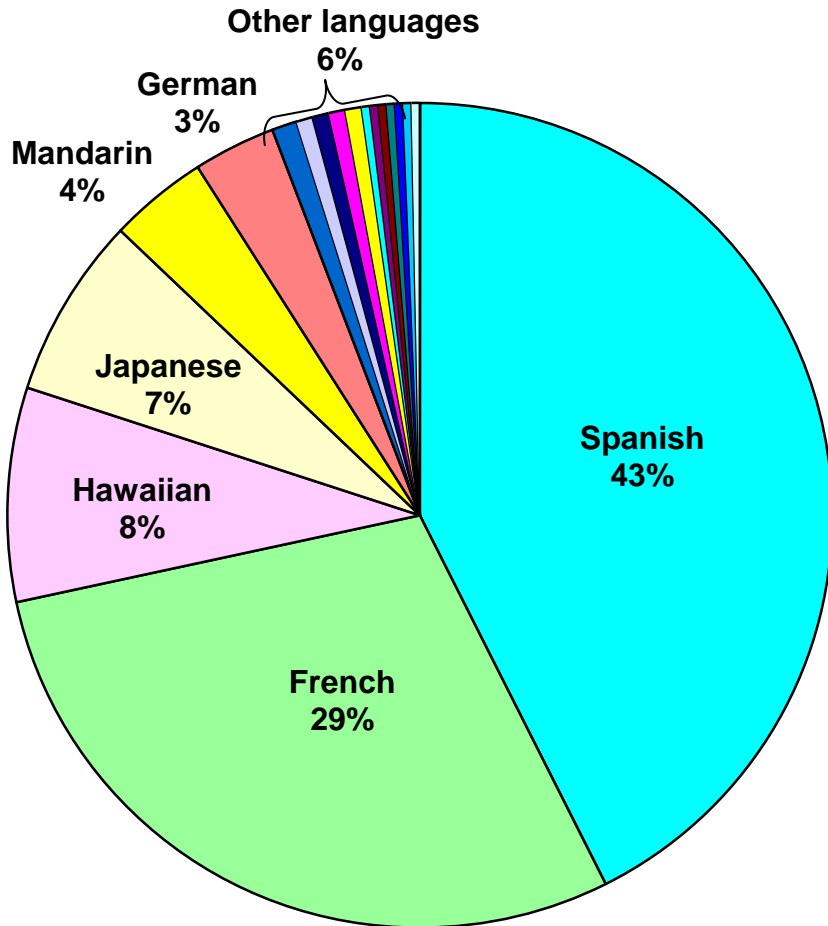El Marino Language School
Culver City, CA
708 students

➢Spanish immersion program – 21 classrooms

➢Japanese immersion program – 11 classrooms

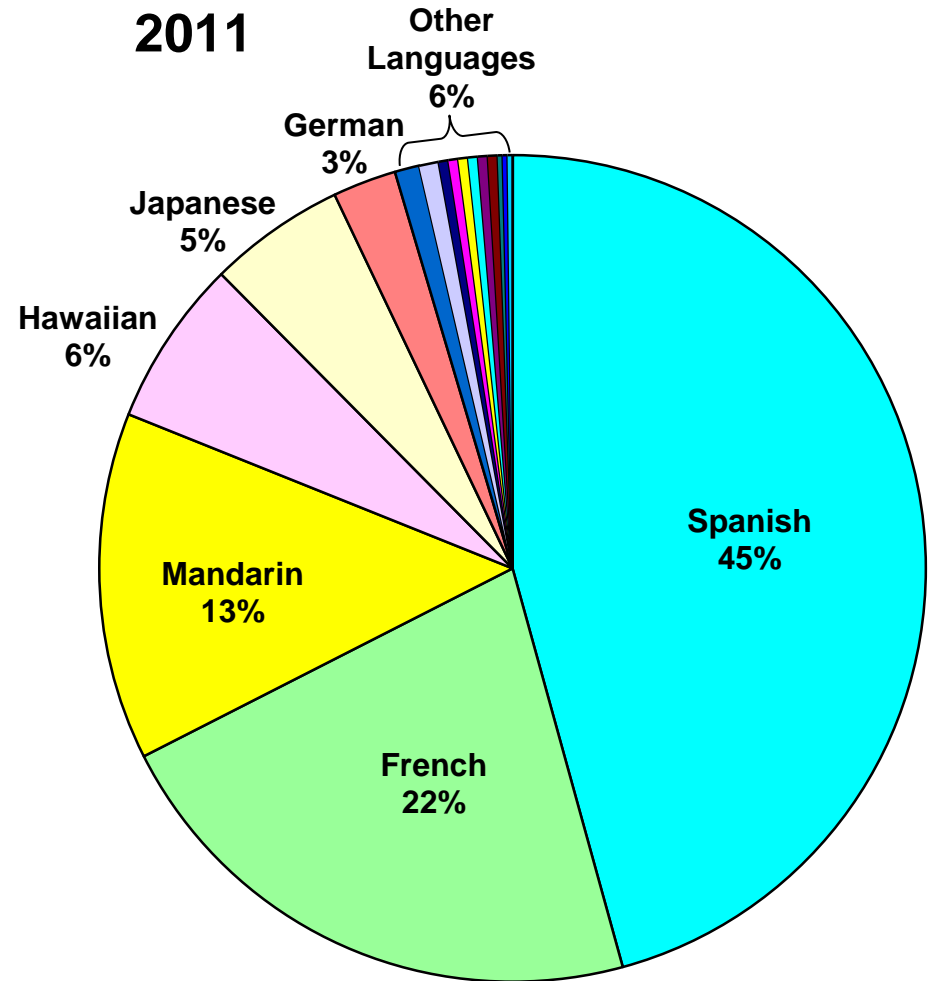# Growth of Language Immersion in the United States 1971-2011

Percentage of Immersion Programs by Language of Instruction, 2006 vs. 2011

2006

- Other languages 6%
- German 3%
- Mandarin 4%
- Japanese 7%
- Hawaiian 8%
- French 29%
- Spanish 43%

2011

- Other Languages 6%
- German 3%
- Japanese 5%
- Hawaiian 6%
- Mandarin 13%
- French 22%
- Spanish 45%

Indigenous Immersion Programs

Note: Best viewed after downloading the Hawaiian fonts free for PC/Mac <--

Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Hawai'i
the hawaiian language immersion program

Ka Papahana Kaiapuni Hawai'I
Hawaiian Immersion Program

"The program is a vehicle for revitalizing the Hawaiian language and assisting people to regain and maintain their language."

"The students understand that they will be responsible for the perpetuation of the native Hawaiian language and be the stewards of the cultural heritage of the Indigenous people of Hawai'i."
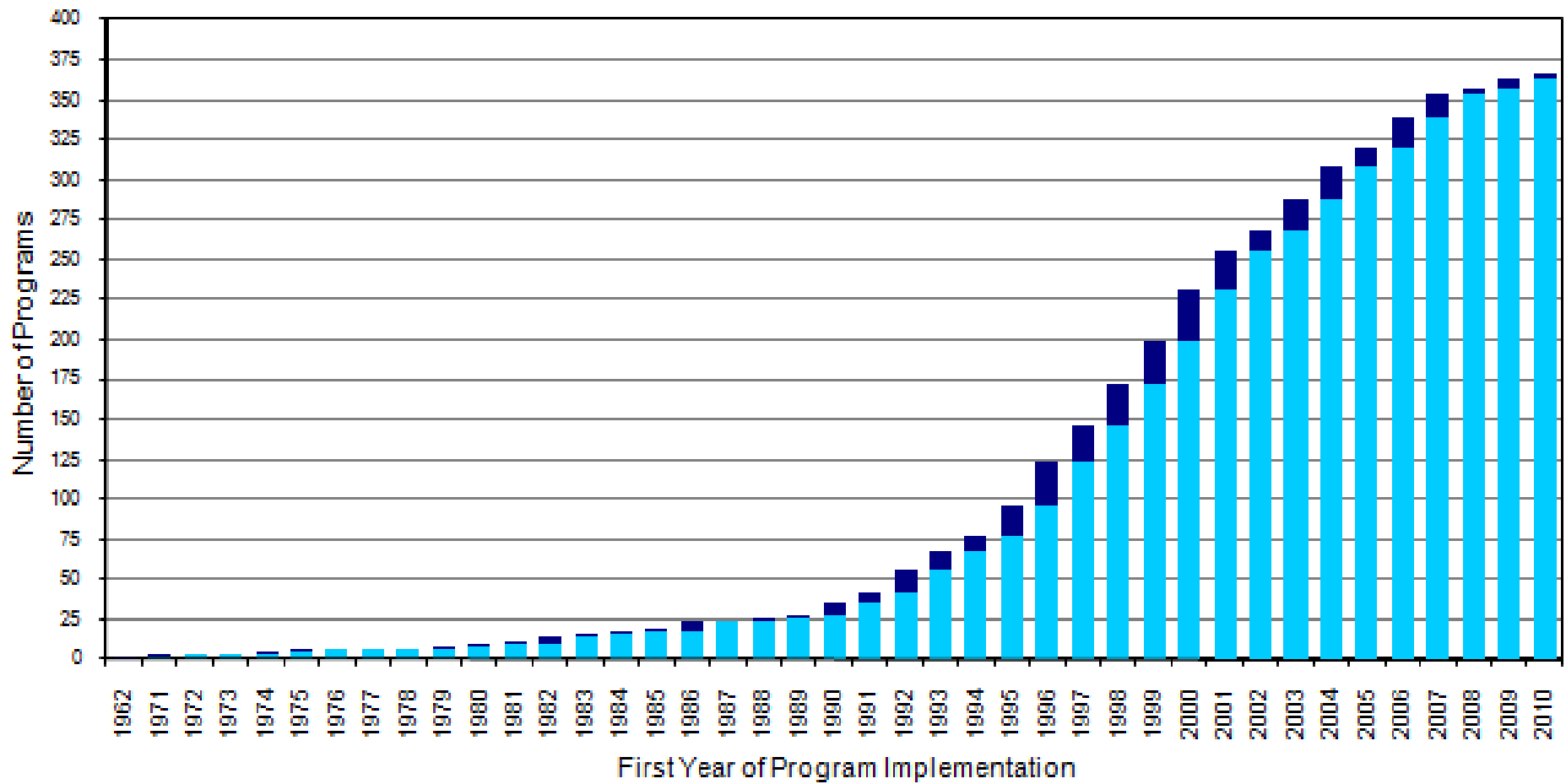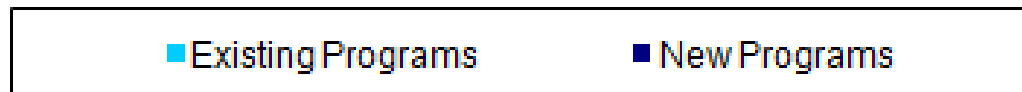
Two-way Immersion Education

Converging

▸ 1986-1990: Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR) – Campbell, Tucker, Lambert, Swain, Lindholm-Leary

▸ Focus: developing a "language-competent American society" (Tucker) through
  − Foreign language education for majority language speakers (especially immersion)
  − Bilingual education for minority language speakers (especially developmental bilingual (late exit) education

Two-way (interlocking) bilingual programs

▸ Federal funding for developmental programs (brief)

Growth of Two-Way Immersion

Source: Directory of Two-Way Immersion Programs in the United States. Available at http://www.cal.org/twi/directory.

Policy Contexts and Implementation Spaces

▸ **Swedish immersion in Finland**

▸ **Basque immersion in the Basque Country**

▸ **Irish immersion in Ireland**

▸ **Spanish-English two-way immersion in the U.S.**

Promising Strategies

▶ **Incentives**
  − **Ex. Seal of Biliteracy**
    California, New York

▶ **Information sharing**

▶ **Arguments based on other priorities**

▶ **Language roadmaps**

Language Roadmaps

http://www.thelanguageflagship.org/roadmaps

- **Oregon (2007)**
  - Build on strengths, "Innovative educational models such as **immersion** schools "

- **Texas (2007**

- **Ohio (2007)**

- **Utah (2009)**
  - Encourage the expansion of dual **immersion** programs to additional schools in multiple languages…

- **Rhode Island (2012)**
  - Proposal to fund development of an articulated PK-16 **immersion**-style language learning curriculum in a locally determined target world language.

Advocacy Resources

▶ **JNCL/NCLIS**

– **www.languagepolicy.org**

– "Language Advocacy: Making Your Voice Count" video

▶ **ACTFL**

– **www.actfl.org**

– **State-level advocacy teams**

– "You Don't Have to Be an Experienced Lobbyist to Make a Difference"

▶ **TESOL, NABE, regional/state/local organizations, etc.**

Public Opinion

Question 2: Respondents were asked if they agree or disagree with the following statement: *If our children and grandchildren don't learn other languages, they will be at a competitive disadvantage in their careers.*

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of Americans surveyed believe that if our young people do not learn foreign languages, they will be at a competitive disadvantage in their careers. Forty-seven percent strongly agree with this statement.

NAFSA, 2011
www.nafsa.org

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	47
Not so strongly agree	18
Not so strongly disagree	15
Strongly disagree	17
Don't know	3

Challenges

▶ Teacher requirements

▶ Articulation across educational levels

▶ Assessment policies

▶ Core standards and/or national curricula

Concluding Thoughts: Wish List

Policies that will:

▸ Encourage high quality, well-articulated K-12 dual language programs

▸ Include proficiency in languages other than English among core areas of achievement

▸ Give credit and provide incentives for learning additional languages

▸ Expand availability of high quality teacher preparation programs to prepare dual language education teachers

Merci

Gracias

Thank you!