

Do you speak my language? Supporting success in young dual language learners.

Utah Head Start Association Conference

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Who am I?

Worked for 9 years as an ECSE teacher

- 4 years in a self-contained preschool classroom in P.G. County, MD
- 5 years as an ECSE 0-3 Home visitor in rural, MN out of New Ulm and Mankato
- Some small agricultural towns in MN such as Sleepy Eye and Faribault have school-age Latino populations ranging from 30-40%

Who am I ?

- An Assistant Professor at Utah State University in the department of Special Education and Rehabilitation
- My dissertation study compared the verbal interactions during dialogic reading during a Spanish and English condition with young Spanish-speaking children enrolled in Head Start home visiting in rural south central Minnesota

Current Research

- Helped to start a transitional bilingual education Head Start preschool program in Faribault, MN
- This is a rural town where the Elementary school population is about 30% Latino
- I will be collecting language, literacy, and concept development data for three years on the same cohort of children through Kindergarten
- I have also started working with Migrant Head Start in Utah.

Why am I here?

- To provide evidence-based answers to many of the pressing questions about working with young English Language Learners in the field of Early Childhood Education
- (I wish I had this information when I was teaching!)
and,
- Because I care about the academic and social outcomes of this population of students. I am the first generation born in the U.S. on both sides of my family and I grew up speaking Spanish, German, and English in my home

Why are you here?

- Write three pressing questions you have about providing services for dual language learners (DLLs). List the languages the children speak in your settings. Take a minute to share with a neighbor.

Only Rule for Today: Be open to new possibilities!

- You may learn many new ideas today that cause you to question your current practice. That's okay! We are here to learn together.

Today's Schedule

- Bilingual development
- Research on ELLs and academic outcomes
- Classroom instructional strategies
- Working with culturally and linguistically diverse families

Key components of bilingualism

Common Question:

**Does being bilingual cause
language delay?**

Definition of key terms

Simultaneous: Two languages acquired from birth

Sequential: No consensus in the field, ideas range from the introduction of the second language at the age of one month to 3 years.

Dual Language Learners- Head Start has adopted the term “Dual Language Learners (DLLs)” to include children who fall into both of these categories.

(deHouwer, 1990; Genesee, Paradis, Crago, 2004; MacLaughlin, 1984)

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- **Additive bilingualism:** “Situations where both languages are supported and languages develop in parallel.”
 - **Subtractive bilingualism:** “Situations characterized by a gradual loss of the first language as a result of increasing mastery and use of the second language.”

(Diaz & Klingler, 1999; Genesee, Paradis, & Crago, 2004)

Research evidence provided by samples of young simultaneous bilinguals

- Young (middle class) bilingual children who acquire two languages from birth reach **linguistic milestones** at the same age as their monolingual peers. We need to look at BOTH of their languages using Conceptual Scoring.
(Bedore, Peña, Garcia, Cortez, 2005; Genesee, 2001; Holowka et al., 2002; Petitto, 2001)
- Young bilinguals demonstrate **interlocutor sensitivity** indicating that they are aware of which language to use with different people
(Maneva & Genesee, 2002; Petitto et al., 2001)

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- An abundance of **translation equivalents** have been documented in young bilingual children demonstrating that young children recognize that they need different words for the same concept in different contexts. (Genesee, 2001; Holowka et al., 2002; Pearson, Fernández, & Oller, 1995; Petitto, 2001)

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- **Code-mixing** that follows grammatical rules is not evidence of language confusion, but has been found to be directly proportional to the rate of language mixing in the child's environment.

e.g. "Spanglish" (Lanza, 1992; Petitto et al., 2001)

Activity- Applying Bilingual Language Terms

- Write an example of each of these terms thinking about bilingual children you have worked with.
 1. Interlocutor sensitivity
 2. Translation equivalents
 3. Code-switching

Stages of Second Language Acquisition in Early Childhood

(Tabors, 1997)

1. **Silent/Nonverbal**

Child is listening and observing while “cracking the code” of the new language.

2. **Early Production**

Telegraphic speech: Children used shortened phrases such as “put paper” to convey “I want you to put the paper on the table.”

Formulaic speech: Children use prefabricated chunks before they have any idea of what they mean.

Stages of Second Language Acquisition

3. Productive Language Use

Child begins to demonstrate an understanding of the syntactic system of the language.

They go beyond short phrases and formulas to create their own sentences conveying their own precise meaning.

Language Proficiency Cummins Model

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)

- A) Language proficiency needed to function in everyday personal contexts
- B) Not related to academic achievement

Language Proficiency

Cummins Model

- C) Usually attained after two years in host country
- D) Examples include the child who has English phrases often heard on favorite TV programs such as Blue's Clues, Dora, etc. or the child who can respond in English in a routine setting such as saying "yes please" at snack or "my turn" to another child during free play.

It is critical that BICS is not confused with...

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALPS)

- A) Language Proficiency needed to function in decontextualized, academic settings.
- B) Skills needed to manipulate language outside of the immediate interpersonal context.
- C) Dimension of language related to literacy skills.

CALP

- D) CALP develops throughout school years
- E) Attained between five and seven years in host country
- F) Examples include the child who can answer more abstract questions in English such as “What do you do when you are hungry?” or can complete verbal analogies in English such as “A horse is big a mouse is _____?”

Research evidence suggests that there is a significant amount of individual variation!

- Instead it is critical to look at all English language learning students individually
- There are generally no big categories to capture all students' language abilities
- Research indicates these are some of the critical factors in acquiring a second language:
SES, maternal education, cognitive ability, level of mastery in native language, motivation, older siblings, age of introduction to L2

First things first...

Doesn't every child need to learn
English?

Reframing the Question

The Question is **not**
whether or not **all**
children in the United
States need to learn
English...

Of course they do!

The Question is how do we
best teach young
English language
learners English, help
them to maintain their
native language, and
produce the best long
term academic
outcomes?

Research evidence to answer the question “English-only or native language support”?

Based on a convergence of evidence it is recognized that supporting a child’s native language early on and specifically developing early literacy skills in a child’s native language better supports later academic outcomes in English (August & Shanahan, 2006; Christian, 1996; Cummins, 1979; Oller & Eilers, 2002; Espinosa, 2008; Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005; Thomas & Collier, 2002; + many more)

Diversity in Learners

A child's ability to learn any language is constrained by their cognitive level and/or level of language impairment. However, research (and practical evidence) has shown that humans can learn more than one language and that learning two languages is not inherently more difficult than learning one language.

Practical Evidence

- Over 1/2 of the world's population is bilingual (deHouwer, 1995)
- Many other countries have instituted and researched bilingual education including: Canada, Norway, The Netherlands, Sweden, Australia, Mexico and China (Krashen, 1999)

Other reasons to support a child's native language

The child will be surrounded with English speakers and will quickly recognize English as the language with higher status and power in this society. The greatest likelihood is actually that immigrant children will discontinue using their native language (Portes & Hao, 1998).

Language Rights as Civil Rights

- **Lau v. Nichols (1974)**

“recognized language rights as civil rights and the relationship of equal educational opportunities to the language of education”

- **Dyrcia S. et al. v. Board of Education of N.Y. (1979)**

judgment issued calling for the provision of appropriate bilingual programs for all children with both high and low incidence disabilities.

- **Ray M. v. NYC Board of Education (1994)** ELL Pre-K children referred for ECSE were found to be denied timely special education evaluations in the appropriate language and were being placed inappropriately in the most restrictive classrooms. This case was successful in creating new inclusive environments for ELL children in ECSE and for having these students tested in their native language

Other reasons to support a child's native language

Given the global economy and increasing diversity in our country there is actually a great demand for fully proficient bilinguals. Why should we not support this capacity in native speakers? (Portes & Hao, 1998; Valdes, 1997)

Social-Emotional Study (Chang et al, 2007)

Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute

- Study examined the social and language development of 345 Spanish-speaking pre-kindergarteners in programs that varied in how much Spanish was used during the day.
- Researchers found better social skills and closer teacher-child relationships in classrooms where some Spanish was spoken.
- Robert Pianta has found that the relationship between the children and the teacher as measured by the CLASS is the strongest predictor of improved academic outcomes, especially for children living in poverty

Other reasons to support a child's native language

The child must be able to communicate with his/her family and community so that he/she does not become socially isolated. Maintaining strong native language skills will allow parents to communicate affection, discipline and teach cultural values (Wong-Fillmore, 1991).

Cautious applications to EC and ECSE given the current state of the research

Based on a convergence of evidence, in EC/ECSE we should move toward bilingual practice versus an English-only approach with young ELLs

- ✌️👉 Research on young simultaneous bilinguals indicates that being bilingual does not inherently cause language delay,
- ✌️👉 There is evidence that supports bilingual preschool practice, and
- 👍👉 There is significant evidence that suggests that supporting native language development early on enhances long term academic outcomes in English

If I speak only English how can I
support native language
development?

Language of Intervention

- Take a minute to answer this question. What language or languages do you currently use for instruction?
- List all of the bilingual resources that you have including materials and personnel.
- Share with a partner. Keep this in mind for the next section.

What strategies can I use if I do not speak the child's language?

You are an ELL teacher!!!

- The first important step in the process of building your knowledge in this area is to realize that by default you may need the skills of an ELL teacher.
- Most of you have not had specific training in second language acquisition. So there is a lot to learn!
- It takes specific skills to educate English Language Learners
- This presentation is a first step, but continually seek more training and information
- ELL and Special Education services DO NOT NEED TO BE MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE—A STUDENT MAY NEED BOTH!

Insert English reading video

English Language Reading

- Notice how teacher cannot respond appropriately to comments made by child
- Parent needed to prompt response in Spanish
- Once prompted in Spanish child could respond with a full sentence to question
- Child mostly uses rehearsal strategies – repeats words, short phrases (telegraphic speech)
- Don't judge this may be you 😊

Insert Spanish reading video

Spanish Language Reading

- Notice how child can respond to questions asked
- Can respond with novel sentences expressing his own ideas (productive speech)
- There is extension of his ideas and humor
- Teacher can respond appropriately building on his comments using “elaboration” an interactive reading strategy known to improve literacy outcomes

Supporting Language and Cognitive Development

- Have bilingual books and books on tape (if not available have a parent/volunteer/para read or tell a story and record it)
- Label everything that you have labeled in English in the child's native language
- Find volunteers to read/tell stories in the child's native language (access high school/college students) USE DIALOGIC READING STRATEGIES
- Do early literacy activities in the child's native language if possible i.e. picture naming, rhyming and alliteration (Estrellita is a Spanish literacy curriculum available from <http://www.estrellita.com/>)

Why Dialogic Reading?

- Dialogic Reading has a strong empirical base and has been shown to improve oral vocabulary development in both English-and Spanish-speaking children (Hargrave & Sénéchal, 2000; Lonigan, et al., 1999; Sénéchal & Cornell, 1993; Whitehurst, et al., 1988; Valdez-Menchaca & Whitehurst, 1992; Whitehurst, et al., 1994; Whitehurst, et al., 1999).
- Dialogic reading is hypothesized to increase oral vocabulary development because of the focus on eliciting verbal interactions between the reader and the child.

What is Dialogic Reading?

PEER

Prompt—Ask questions and respond to child

Evaluate—Affirm child's answer

Expand—Expand on the child's answer by giving more information

Repeat—Child can repeat the correct response

Dialogic Reading cont'd

CROWD

Completion—Allow child to complete a phrase

Recall—Ask a recall question

Open-ended—Ask open-ended questions i.e. How did... Tell me about...

W—As “Wh” questions: What , Why, Who, When

Distancing— Connect the book to child's own life

Supporting Academic Success

- Pre-teach key vocabulary before lessons – Use visual symbols, concrete objects, interactive games and activities – DO NOT jump into a lesson without some level of vocabulary support!
- Modify reading level and lessons as necessary. Use theme-based, integrated learning opportunities.

“Rich definition” approach to vocabulary teaching with ELLs (Collins, in press)

1. Choose a book and select target vocabulary.
2. When you are reading the book point to the illustration of target vocabulary word.
3. Provide a general definition of the word (Donned means to put on clothing)
4. Provide a synonym (Henry put on his slippers; he donned slippers to wear on his feet.)

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5. Make a gesture of the word when applicable (i.e. pretend to “put on” a shoe or sock)
 6. Use the word in a context different from the book. i.e. At dismissal “okay everyone it is time to *don* our coats”

Vocabulary activity

- Choose a book
- Choose 2 key vocabulary words to target
- Describe the “rich definition” approach you might take with each of the words. Go through each step with a partner.

Supporting Language and Cognitive Development: Visual Strategies

- Use visual aids around the classroom to facilitate communication and participation. Visual Communication books can be used to build the child's confidence in the classroom and to provide a means for the child to initiate communication (Rice & Wilcox, 1998)
- Have alternative formats for children to respond such as pointing to pictures, holding up objects, etc.

Classroom Cultural Competency

To promote cultural competency in their classrooms teachers should (Adapted from Taylor, Promoting Cultural Diversity and Cultural Competency, 2004):

- Display pictures, posters and other materials that reflect the cultural diversity in their classrooms
- Select props for the dramatic play area that are culturally diverse and appropriate i.e. familiar foods, clothes and household items from cultures represented in their classroom

Classroom Cultural Competency

- Have books displayed and accessible that reflect the diversity of cultures and languages in the classroom. If these are not readily available they can be made by children bringing in photographs or making books with family members at home and bringing them in to share.

Classroom Cultural Competency

- Choose multicultural toys, music, food and materials in the classroom to be representative of the population not only of the classroom, but also of society in general.
- Invite families to participate in classroom activities and share stories, songs or foods with the class.
- Actively incorporate multicultural materials and ideas in every lesson and continually self-evaluate your own cultural competency.

If I am lucky enough to have
them,
what should I do with bilingual
staff in my classroom?
Or if I am bilingual how can I best
use my skills?

Suggestions for incorporating bilingual staff into an English-only setting

- Bilingual interpreters and paraprofessionals should be involved in all classroom planning and should be aware of each day's activities in advance.
- He/she should have enough time to plan for the appropriate vocabulary and suggest modifications to the lesson plan to ensure the activity is culturally appropriate and meaningful to the child.

Individual and Small Group

- Bilingual staff can be used for direct instruction with the child or small groups of children who share the same L1 during “work times”. Bilingual staff should not just be translating. **Concurrent translation is NOT best practice** (Cloud, Genesee, Hamayan, 2000; Freedson, 2005)

Language of Instruction Dissertation Study (Freedson, 2005, Harvard University)

- Freedson found that Spanish-speaking preschoolers performed the best overall in language and literacy in Spanish language classrooms with the most teacher talk related to literacy.
- Students performed second best in English-only classrooms with NO codeswitching, and high levels of literacy related talk.
- Students demonstrated the least progress in classrooms with a significant amount of codeswitching by the teacher during instruction and a low level of literacy talk.
- Think about how you are using language(s) throughout the day

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- Teachers should try to avoid the pitfall of the child's native language only being used for directions, transitions or during free play.
 - Any new concepts that are specifically taught in English should also be delivered in the child's native language. This will help the child not miss any new concepts because of a language barrier and it will support vocabulary, literacy, and concept development in their L1.

Large Group Activities

- Large group teacher directed activities can often be the most difficult for young children with limited English proficiency.
- In dual language situations it is best practice NOT to switch back and forth between languages (Cloud et al., 2000)
- In this scenario use your bilingual staff to run a concurrent circle/story time in the child's or children's native language. Or develop specific large group activities for your ELLs.

Integrating Linguistic Diversity

- Bilingual staff should also be involved in instruction with English-speaking children in the classroom to familiarize the other children with the native language(s) of their peer(s). If the English-speaking children can learn a few words of the other child's or children's L1 they may be more likely to engage him/her in play (Tabors, 1997).







Instruction Activity

- What are some ways you can increase native language use and cultural integration in your classroom? Why do you think this is important?
- What are some ways you can support native language development?
- Who can you access in the community to help?
- List three things you know you can change in your current practice. Why would you change them?
Answer this on your own and then we will divide into groups by counting and each person will share out in his/her group.

Home Support

The family should be instrumental in assisting to maintain the child's native language development through directed support at home.

Home Support

-  Send curriculum materials home in the family's native language,
-  Ask for family photos and display around the classroom or make books,
-  Get lists of common objects, foods, etc and then make books
-  Use lending libraries to get more materials
-  Make home visits,
-  Organize family support meetings, involving community partners like family literacy, local churches, cultural organizations, etc.

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- ❖ Basically the teacher needs to be creative and an initial investment of time and the use of an interpreter/volunteer to translate written materials will hopefully pay off with the development of materials that can be used from year to year.
 - ❖ *Who currently sends everything home in the child's native language?

Family's thoughts on maintaining the native language

- The reactions of families to the importance of maintaining the home language will vary.
- Some will agree with you and will be eager to maintain their native language in the home environment.
- Others will see their native language as a possible hindrance to their child's acculturation and future success.
- Be sure to communicate your thoughts on this issue to the family and explain why it has been shown that native language development is critical to the acquisition of English and later academic skills and that being bilingual is in fact an incredible asset in a diverse country such as the United States.

Family Involvement

Encourage the family to:

- ✓ Continue speaking their native language to the child
- ✓ Explain that if the family does not speak English fluently they will have a hard time teaching proper English grammar and pronunciation to the child. It is more confusing for the child to have an inaccurate model of the language. Let them know that they are experts in their native language and you need their help and that you will work at school to teach English.

Family Involvement

- ✓ Help the family be able to read or talk about books with their child and teach basic concepts such as colors, numbers, shapes, etc. in the child's native language. Be sure to send home appropriate native language materials for the family to use. These can be teacher made or found at lending libraries, etc.

Family Involvement

- ✓ Be sure that all correspondence with the family is in their native language. Daily notes in the notebooks, notes about projects, school information, etc.
- ✓ Emphasize the fact that most any child can learn two languages, even a child with a developmental delay.

Family Activity

- What strategies do you currently use to communicate with families who speak a language other than English?
- What resources and administrative support do you have for interpretation/translation of materials?
- What new ideas were generated for you during the presentation. List three. How will you implement them.

Summary

Teaching Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students takes:

- ❖ A commitment to helping the child continue development in their native language
- ❖ A systemic belief that bilingualism is valuable and an asset, not a deficit
- ❖ Collaboration between home and school with a focus on the family as native language experts

Implications for teachers, administrators and policy-makers: Try something new!

- Design and implement inclusive bilingual preschool classrooms in your community
- Involve your local higher ed faculty in Early Childhood teacher preparation so that they can better prepare future teachers.
- Be creative and open to new ideas. Visit places in the country that have strong bilingual Early Childhood Programs... network, read, use the internet, seek funding

What are your next steps in your community to better serve young English Language Learners?

1. What are your personal philosophies regarding this issue and how do they influence your work?
2. What information impacted you from today's presentation?
3. What do you want to do or what can you do in your classroom or program?
4. Who can help?

Resources

- Barrera, I. & Corso, R. (2003) *Skilled Dialogue: Strategies for Responding to Cultural Diversity in Early Childhood*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes
- Genesee, Paradis, Crago (2004). *Dual Language Development and Disorders: A Handbook on Bilingualism and Second Language Learning*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes

Resources

- Lynch, E.W. & Hanson, M. J. (2004) *Developing Cross-Cultural Competence: A Guide for Working with Children and their Families.* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes
- Tabors, P. (1997) *One Child Two Languages: A Guide for Preschool Educators of Children Learning English as a Second Language.* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes

Resources

Espinosa, L.M. (2008). *Challenging common myths about young English language learners. Foundation for Child Development Policy Brief Number 8*. Retrieve from http://www.fcdus.org/resources/resources_show.htm?doc_id=669789