

presents

**What Does the Research Say About Curriculum and Assessment for Young
Dual Language Learners?**

April 14, 2010

Linda M. Espinosa, Ph.D., Professor of Early Childhood Education at the University
of Missouri-Columbia (recently retired)

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NCELA is operated under contract ED-04-CO-0094/0002 from the US Department of Education to The George Washington University. Our mission is to provide technical assistance information to state education agencies, local education agencies, and others regarding the education of English language learners.

Welcome

- Welcome to the webinar on “What Does the Research Say About Curriculum and Assessment for Young Dual Language Learners?” Today’s webinar is hosted by the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, NCELA, located at the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at The George Washington University, funded through a contract with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition.
- NCELA's mission is to provide technical assistance information to state and local educational agencies on issues pertaining to English language learners.
- My name is Kathia Flemens, Ph.D., a Research Associate at NCELA and your Webinar facilitator.

presents

Today our presenter is:

Linda M. Espinosa, Ph.D., Professor of Early Childhood Education at the University of Missouri-Columbia (recently retired)

Ms. Janet Brown, Senior Research Associate at the Center for Equity and Excellence in Education (CEEE) will facilitate questions



THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
CENTER FOR EQUITY AND
EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

What Does the Research Say About Curriculum and Assessment for Young Dual Language Learners?



How can research guide our practices with children and families who speak a language other than English at home?

By Linda M. Espinosa, Ph.D.

Language is the Foundation for
Literacy....and Literacy is Key to
school success.

**Strong Reading Skills (in English)
are Essential for Academic
Success in U.S!!!**

**How do we accomplish this goal
when children already have a
language that is not English?**

Who are Dual Language Learners?

- Children who are Dual Language Learners acquire two or more languages simultaneously, as well as learn a second language while continuing to develop their first language. The term "dual language learners" encompasses other terms frequently used, such as Limited English Proficient (LEP), bilingual, English language learners (ELL), English learners, and children who speak a language other than English (LOTE).
 - Office of Head Start, 2009

Dual Language Learners are:

**1. Learning Two Languages
Simultaneously or Successively**

and

2. Learning **Through Two Languages**

Simultaneous Dual Language Learners

*Children who learn two or more languages from birth or at least **within the first year after birth**. In effect, simultaneous bilingual children have two first languages. They can be exposed to languages in different ways, from their parents or siblings in the home, from child care workers in the home or in child care centers, or from grandparents or relatives ...*

Sequential/Successive Second Language Learners

*Children who begin to learn an additional language **after about 1-2 years** of age; that is, after the first language is established.*



Young Dual Language Population is Diverse and Growing

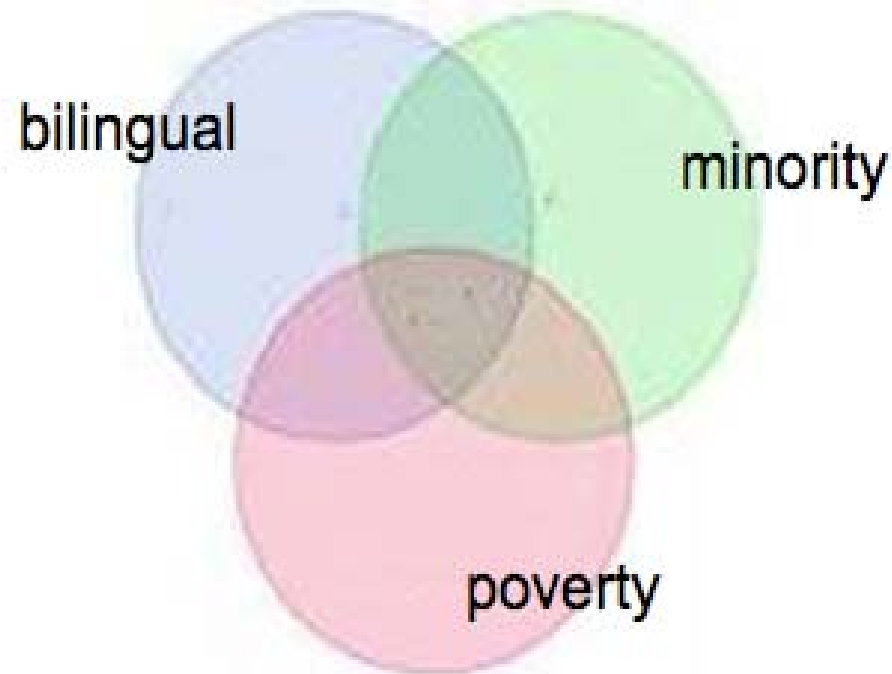
- About 30% of all children in Head Start are Dual Language Learners (OHS, 2006)
 - More than 140 different languages in Head Start; more than 400 languages in U.S.;
 - Spanish is most common home language
 - Less than 16% of programs do not serve DLL
- In California 42% of all kindergarten children identified as DLL (2006)
 - In LAUSD 59% of all K children identified as EL
 - More than 80 different languages spoken

Achievement Gap Starts Before Kindergarten for Dual Language Learners

Hispanics/Latinos lag behind White and Asian peers in math and reading ($>.5$ SD) at K entry and throughout K-3 schooling

- ✓ Influenced by Socio-Economic Status & Home language
- ✓ DLL children not all the same! (Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Kindergarten Cohort, ECLS-K)
- ✓ Children from different language groups (English, Spanish, Asian, & European languages) all show different development & achievement patterns (birth-3yrs) (K-3)

How Much of Achievement is Due to Language Status (DLL) vs Poverty vs Limited Learning Opportunities??



***Outcomes Related to Both
Which Language is Spoken in
Home and SES Level of Family
(ECLS-K data disaggregated
by language and SES)***

Language & SES »»» Achievement

Language & Socio-Economic Status

(from Espinosa et al., 2007)

Table 5. Percent of language minority households (definition 2) by SES

SES	English speaking	Spanish speaking	European speaking	Asian speaking
First Quintile	13	44	6	18
Second Quintile	19	20	19	18
Third Quintile	21	15	19	18
Fourth Quintile	23	12	22	19
Fifth Quintile	24	9	34	27

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Longitudinal Kindergarten-Third Grade Public-Use Data File.

Language & SES, Cont.

Table 6. Percent of language minority households (definition 3) by SES

SES	English speaking	Spanish speaking +	Spanish speaking -
First Quintile	13	25	63
Second Quintile	19	19	17
Third Quintile	21	15	10
Fourth Quintile	23	20	6
Fifth Quintile	24	21	4

Note: Spanish speaking + indicates scoring above the cutoff on the English OLDS and Spanish speaking - indicates scoring below the cutoff.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Longitudinal Kindergarten-Third Grade Public-Use Data File.

Does early exposure to two languages put young children “at risk”?

- Bilingualism by itself does not put a child “at risk”
- When DLL child scores are aggregated, important within group distinctions are masked

Children of Spanish-Speaking Immigrants Also Show Strengths

- More likely to have two parents and extended families
- Committed to school and have college aspirations
- Language Abilities (just not English!)
- Social-emotional competencies

How Can Our Knowledge About the Development of Dual Language Learners Shape Educational Decision-Making?

As more young DLLs enter our early education programs, what do we need to know about their development and how should we apply information and define “best practices” that promote high achievement and positive long-term developmental outcomes?

Sources of Information About Dual Language Learning

- Research Findings from Diverse Disciplines:
 - Neuroscientists (impact of language learning on architecture of brain)
 - Psycholinguists: (process of language development)
 - Early childhood program evaluations
 - Curriculum studies (PCERS)
 - K-12 studies on literacy for DLLs (National Literacy Panel Report, 2006; Genesee et al., 2006)

New Research on Infant Brain Development Requires New Thinking on ECE for Dual Language Learners

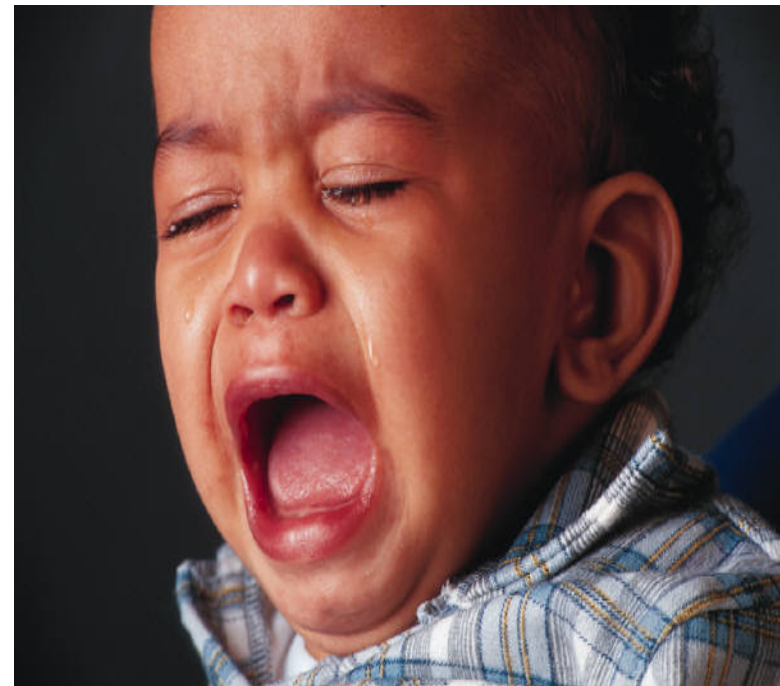
“Children and adults are different forms of *Homo sapiens*.” Gopnik, (2010). *The Philosophical Baby*.

“The learning and development of dual language learners is ***qualitatively*** different from monolingual learners.” *Espinosa, (2010)*.

Evidence Challenges Myths

- Learning a Second Language will Overwhelm, Confuse Young Child;
- May Delay English Acquisition
- Counter-Intuitive Findings

Espinosa, L. (2008). *Challenging common myths about young English language learners*. Foundation for Child development Policy Brief No. Eight



Patricia Kuhl and Colleagues, Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences, U. of Washington:

“...what we see in the crib is the greatest mind that has ever existed, the most powerful learning machine in the universe. ...The crumpled ears take a buzz of incomprehensible noise and flawlessly turn it into meaningful language.That, at least, is what thirty years of scientific research have told us.”

Gopnik, A., Meltzoff, A. N., & Kuhl, P. K. (2000). The scientist in the crib: What early learning tells us about the mind.



Human fetuses are able to memorize sounds from the external world by the last trimester of pregnancy, with a particular sensitivity to melody contour in both music and language.

Babies coo, babble, and cry in their native language.

At birth: ALL infants have the innate capacity to learn more than 1 language:

➤ Can perceive all phonemes whether or not important in native language; Two linguistic systems develop; By 9-12 months “phonemic pruning” has occurred

Infant Brain Research, Language & Learning P. Kuhl, 2008, 2007, 2004



- ❖ Timing (critical early years)
- ❖ Capacity; Separate Linguistic Systems
- ❖ Social

Myth: Early English Immersion Accelerates English Acquisition

- Preschoolers are still mastering their first language (attachment & identity formation)
- **Substituting** 2nd language (English) for 1st language can have long term negative impact on achievement & social outcomes

Myth: If I can't provide bilingual program, English-only will work

- Too many languages, lack of bilingual staff, parent preferences, local mandates may lead to English-only approach
- Many, many practical strategies for monolingual teachers to support home language development short of full bilingual approach.....
 - *STARTS WITH ATTITUDES & BELIEFS*

Dangers of Early English Immersion and Loss of Home Language

- Potential bilingualism lost (Oller & Eilers, 2002)
- Family communication problems (Wong-Fillmore, 2000)
- Cultural identity confusion
- At-risk for low levels of English fluency and achievement (Thomas & Collier, 2002)

Implications for Early Childhood

- Begin second language learning earlier rather than later
- Take steps to ensure ongoing development of first language (Home language is fragile when not English)
- Respect linguistic capacities of young children-- they are better language learners than you are!
- Monitor language usage in classrooms
 - ***Use Good Early Childhood Practices!!!***

Implications

- ALL young children *can* become bilingual
 - Cognitive, Academic Benefits:
 - Metalinguistic
 - Enhanced prefrontal cortex development (attention)
 - Cultural competence
 - Identity and family connections
 - Financial, Professional, Global
- Input and Exposure (Amount & Quality) is Critical !!!

Evidence-Based Principles of Preschool Dual language Instruction

1. ***Language and literacy in home language
and English***

Ideal: 50% in home language 50% in
English....or

English language instruction with home
language support

Evidence-Based Principles of Preschool Dual language Instruction

2. Enhanced language learning opportunities

Lots of language interactions with peers and adults (stories, personal narratives, songs, chants, rhymes, etc.)

Skilled story-book reading

One-to-one interactions

Evidence-Based Principles of Preschool Dual language Instruction

3. Positive Social Climate

- Respect, accept, and affirm home language and culture
- High expectations for ALL children
- Promote resiliency in ALL children
- Connect content to child's background knowledge

Evidence-Based Principles of Preschool Dual language Instruction

4. Partner with Parents/Families

Engage with parents around common goals

Encourage continued use of home language in varied and extensive ways

Family presence in educational settings (family members, drawings, photos, family stories, etc.)

Stages of Sequential 2nd Language Development

1. Home Language Usage

Ex: Miguel is at the sand table. He asks an English-speaking child, “¿Me das la pala?”

2. Observational, Non-verbal Period

Ex: Sofia looks intently at two girls in the dramatic play area silently mouthing a few words to herself.

3. Formulaic /Telegraphic Speech

Ex: Malika repeatedly says, “I like food, I like colors, I like blocks, etc.” throughout the day.

4. Productive Speech

Ex: Anika announces after being in the playground, “Shoes wet.”

Example of Instructional Adaptation

Child is in observational stage:

Children are mostly silent when interacting with teacher and peers. They may attend to others speaking English and participate non-verbally

Children will become quiet, and will observe and listen intensely as the new language is used in different activities.

- Model instructions with gestures and by showing children several times, what they are being asked to do.
- Give child time to respond, link objects with English labels and avoid using standardized assessments
- Provide opportunities for small group interactions (with English speaking peers)

Summary of Enhanced Literacy Strategies for Dual Language Learners

- Pre-read text in home language
- Identify key words and build vocabulary systematically--skilled story book reading
- Use multi-sensory materials to build understanding of text (puppets, flannel boards, etc.)
- Use interactive reading methods (dialogic)
- Adapt expectations according to stage of L2 acquisition--use small group format!
- Provide opportunities for application & practice of new vocabulary
 - Castro, Espinosa, & Paez, (2009)

Assessment Considerations: DLL Children are Different from Monolingual Children

- *Need to Limit Use of Standardized Tests Developed for Monolingual Populations! Especially vocabulary tests!!*
- Process of Language Acquisition: Simultaneous or Successive/Sequential-- **Need to Know About Early Language Learning**
- Uneven Development: Depends on Child & Environment Characteristics-- **Need to Know Stage of English Acquisition**
- Brain Research on Effects of Early Bilingualism-- **Need to Know About Both Languages**

ECE Assessors Need to Know...

- Dominant language
- English Proficiency
- Home Language Competence
- Language Outcomes (Progress in Curriculum)
- Identification/Referral for Further Evaluation

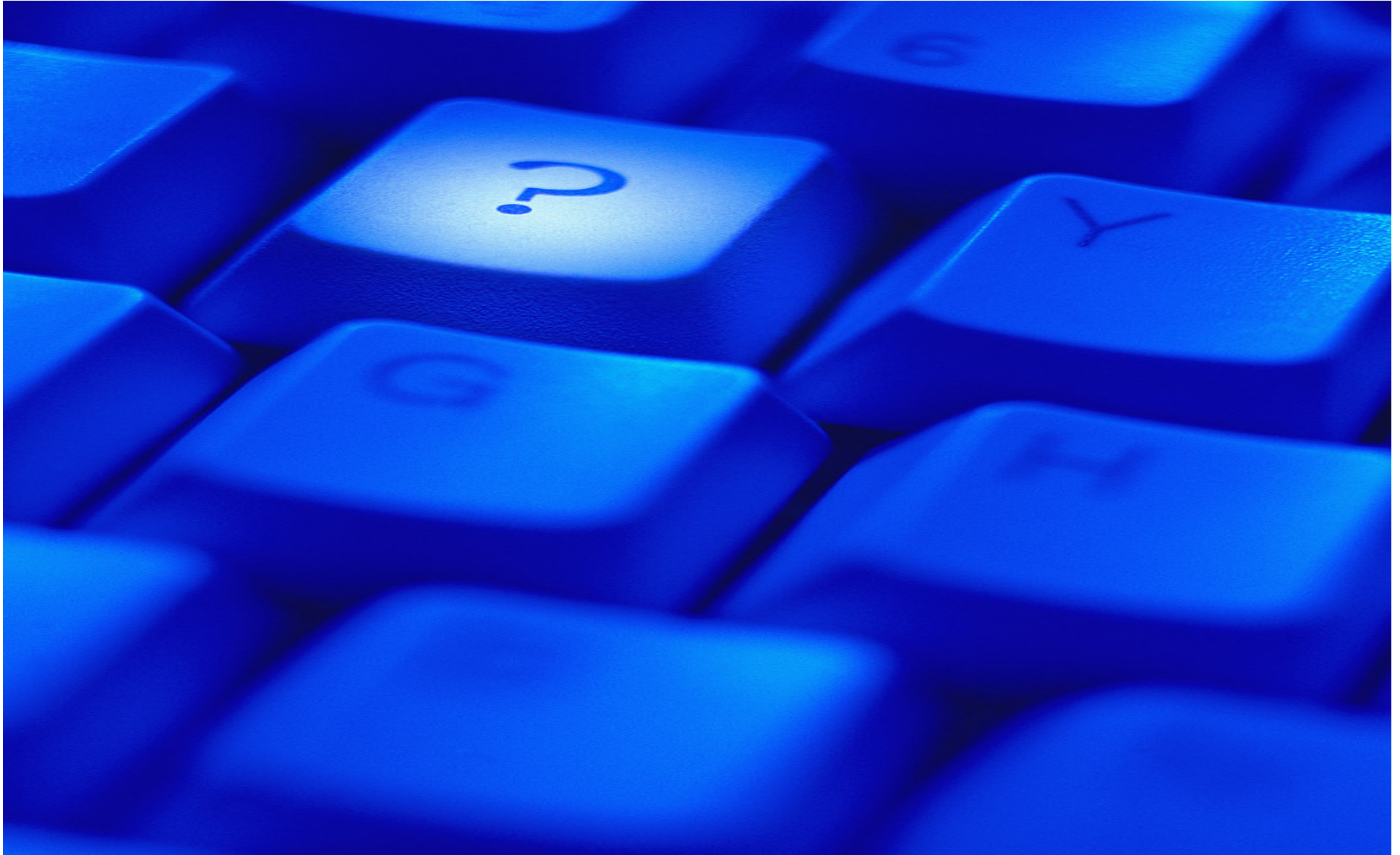
Resources

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- California Department of Education. (2007). *Preschool English Learners: Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy, and Learning*. Author.
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Conclusion

While the research on “best practices” for young Dual language learners is not as robust as we would like, it can offer specific, concrete approaches that will help improve outcomes. We know enough now to do better!

QUESTIONS?



NCELA

National Clearinghouse for
English Language Acquisition and
Language Instruction Educational Programs

Thank you

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- For more information or if you have additional questions regarding today's webinar topic contact:

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This webinar will be archived on NCELA's website. To view archived webinars, please visit <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/webinars/>

Thank you