Working with Latino DLL Children in the Early Childhood Classroom

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Overview

- Changing Demographics
- Maryland specific data
- Types of DLLs
- What we know
- Evidence-based culturally and linguistically appropriate practices
- Implementation

Ready at Five MD - 12/9/2013
Maryland experienced a 133% increase in ELLs from the 1997-1998 school year to the 2007-2008 school year (NCELA, 2010).

The U.S. experienced a 50% increase in ELLs during the same time period (NCELA, 2011).

The top five languages or language groups spoken by ELLs in Maryland are Spanish, Korean, French, Chinese, and Vietnamese (EPE, 2009).

Nationally the top languages spoken in the homes of ELL students are Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, French/Haitian Creole, Hindi (followed closely by Korean and German) (Batalova & McHugh, 2010).
Maryland Data

- MSDE, School Year 2012-2013
  - 16.4% Hispanic Kindergarteners
  - 14.7% English Language Learner Kindergarteners
- Maryland English Language Learners have made considerable overall progress (a 34-point gain) on closing the school readiness gap
- 71% of Hispanic children are fully school-ready, up from 39% in 2001-2002.
More DLLs Fully School-Ready
MMSR, 2012-2013

- 69% of English Language Learners (ELL: children whose first language is not English) are fully school-ready in 2012-2013, up from 35% in 2001-2002.
- The 15-point readiness gap between ELL and English-proficient children remains virtually unchanged in recent years.
  - Increase Enrollment in ECE
  - Increase quality of ECE
- There are nearly 10,000 ELL kindergarteners (a 3% one-year increase).

Source: Maryland State Department of Education
In language & literacy, the school-readiness gap for children who are academically at-risk (children from low-income households, ELL, and children with disabilities) remains virtually unchanged in recent years.

- Within the U.S. Hispanic population only 23% of 3-year-olds and 50% of 4-year-olds attend preschool.
- 26% of the Hispanic-White gap can be reduced by early access to preschool (Waldfogel, 2012)

Source: Maryland State Department of Education
This study was a sub-project of the DeLLS network directed by CAL and funded through NICHD and OERI (Grant # P01 HD39530) (PIs: Tabors and Páez). López was funded through an NSF Postdoctoral Fellowship (award # 0109201).
Children at different levels of dominance may act differently.

What would you expect from different types of DLLs?
Advanced Bilinguals and English dominant kids may blend right in

may have difficulty with some vocabulary or sounds

still benefit from support in Spanish

How can teachers help these children?
Home language dominant kids may need some time and some support in their home language.

Emphasize the connection between the languages.

Length of time will depend on individual characteristics.

How can teachers help these children?
Emergent bilinguals will need the most help!
These are the children falling behind.

Understanding the silent period is key!

How can teachers help these children?
Summary of what we know

- All children can learn 2 languages. Bilingualism has long term cognitive, academic, social, cultural, and economic benefits

- Young DLLs need to have the development of home language supported
Loss of home language has negative long-term consequences for academic, social, and emotional development.

Teachers can adopt effective strategies to support home language development even when they are monolingual English speakers.
Summary of what we know

✓ Dual language programs benefit all children - Systematic and deliberate exposure to English along with ongoing opportunities to learn concepts in the first language results in positive achievement in both English and home language.

✓ Birth through age 8 are critical for language development and developing mastery of sounds, structure, and function of language and an ideal time for children to learn 2 languages.
Contextual factors have a significant effect on where children’s language is at preschool
- Book Reading
- Home Literacy Activities

Exposure and Use of Spanish at home
- Lower initial English scores, but higher rate of growth in English
- Higher initial Spanish scores, maintained significant growth in Spanish

Social Factors Involved
- Parent Education Level
- Community Support for Home Language
What Does Cultural and Linguistic Competence Mean?

- Set of behaviors, attitudes, and policies guiding effective instruction within a diverse setting.
- Develop an understanding of culture: language, thoughts, customs, traditions, beliefs, and values
  - Understand cross-cultural differences
  - Be aware of own culture
- Know the child, the family, and the neighborhood
  - Understand values and goals
How do I Create a Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Classroom?

- Discuss language goals and objectives with families
- Discuss individual children’s abilities, interests, and needs – challenges and opportunities
- If child does not speak any English, use their home language, speak slowly, use gestures and pictures, talk about the here and now
- Make sure there is a routine and organized structure in classroom
- Involve the child
  - What are they an expert in?
  - Have them use home language
How do I Create a Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Classroom?

- Provide attention to each child
- Have spaces for children to work on puzzles and non-language specific activities
- Provide labels in home language as well as English.
- Provide cultural relics in the classroom
- Provide books or audio recordings in child’s language
- Invite family or community members to come read and interact with the children in home language
What should I do to promote language development among DLLs?

- Understand DLL children’s language profiles across time in order to better understand how they are learning.
- Think about classroom context
  - Attend DLL trainings
  - Cultural competency
- Provide extra language support to the Emerging Bilinguals – and everyone else!
But…

- I don’t speak the language
  - Seek out community resources
  - Learn some phrases
  - Show the child you are trying and you care
- I have numerous cultures and languages represented in my classroom
  - Provide a multicultural, language rich, and safe environment
  - Show respect and value for the children and families
But…

- My curriculum doesn’t provide multicultural options
  - Seek out additional resources via the web
  - Incorporate multicultural books and stories
  - Seek out other curricula that can supplement
  - Let the children and families be the experts
  - Enhance language skills with hands on activities
What does a Successful Program for DLLs look Like?

School Climate
- Promote respect for all languages and cultures

Curriculum
- Language and culture is incorporated
- Cultural considerations are made in implementing curricula, choosing materials, interacting with and disciplining students, and understanding different ways to demonstrate knowledge

Instruction
- Development of both languages
- Implement research based practices in instruction

Assessment
- Monitor student’s progress in both languages using multiple measures
- Language proficiency and content knowledge need to be separate

What supports are needed?

- **Climate** – provide a climate of tolerance – all languages and cultures are welcome and respected

- **Curriculum** – choose curricula that respects and incorporates language and culture – dual language models have research based evidence of effectiveness

- **Instruction** – provide consistent professional development and require quality for all programs

- **Assessment** – Encourage assessment in all of the child’s languages – support performance based and authentic assessments
Discussion Questions

What strategies would you employ in determining a DLL’s level of dominance and in tailoring instruction to differing groups of DLLs (i.e., Emergent, Dominant English or Spanish, Advanced)?

What can you do to become more culturally and linguistically competent? How might that change what you do in the classroom?