Questions and Answers About Service Delivery to Linguistically Diverse Populations

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

Participants will be able to:

Respond to questions about the necessary qualifications of professionals serving as bilingual service providers to individuals with speech and language impairments.

Acquire further knowledge and skills in providing fair assessment to diverse linguistic groups.
LEARNING OUTCOMES

Participants will be able to:

Acquire a broader perspective on types of service delivery to bilingual individuals who may have a variety of speech and language impairments.
TIMED AGENDA

✓ 10 min: Introduction-Professional Issues
✓ 15 min: Assessment Issues
✓ 15 min: Intervention Issues
✓ 20 min: Open Forum
PROFESSIONAL ISSUES
Do we have any standards for SLPs who are non-native English-Speakers?

There were several students in my graduate speech/language pathology program for whom English was their second (or third) language. With the high demand for SLPs in the U.S. (and with increasing numbers of students coming from overseas), are specific standards being put into place by ASHA or other agencies?
ANSWER

✓ There are no specific requirements for speech and language skills for SLPs for whom English is their second language. However, ASHA released a Definition of a bilingual SLP in 1989, which states:
ANSWER

“ The roles and responsibilities of bilingual speech-language pathologists or audiologists who present themselves as bilingual for the purposes of providing clinical services, must be able to speak their primary language and to speak (or sign) at least one other language with native or near-native proficiency in lexicon, (vocabulary), semantics (meaning), phonology, (pronunciation), morphology/syntax (grammar), and pragmatics (use) during clinical management ”.
What about SLPs with “accents”? 
One of my students was new to my school this year. He had transferred from another district and had not received services the previous year because his parents explained to me, his SLP was not a native English speaker and they were concerned that therapy would be detrimental to the student. How can SLPs who have accents reassure their clients that they are being provided with a high level of care?
ANSWER

- Question that is not uncommon in our multilingual/multicultural society.
  - Everyone has an accent!!


- No research has been conducted on the influence of an SLP’s accent on the progress of a child with speech/language disorders. **RESEARCH NEEDED.**
But, “accent” should not be an issue if the SLP is intelligible and knows as well as understands the phonetics of English.

A child learns not only from therapy, but also from other persons he/she communicates with.

Saying that a child should not work with an SLP who has “an accent” is sort of discriminatory, but remains somewhat of a “valid” concern of parents and educators who are not familiar with the topic.

ASHA is currently developing a policy on the subject and some universities have adapted a position paper on this topic including ours.
ASSESSMENT
ISSUES ✓ GLOBAL
When can we say an ELL student has a language disorder?

✓ In light of the endless referrals for English Language Learners, how long do you recommend a child be exposed to a new language (in this case, English) before we will even consider him/her for a possible disorder/delay?
This is a very reasonable question.

Before we take any action, we need to consider several parameters:

- Were there delays in the development of the native language?
- Is there significant health history that may affect language development regardless of language?
- If there are no “red flags” we should observe the student’s progress over time. RtI
- Compare with siblings and other students with similar second language acquisition backgrounds and experiences.
Three questions
within one question

✓ Does testing in a child’s native language guarantee an accurate picture of a child’s ability?

✓ And more, when is a child considered an English Language Learner-- Is it when the child is first exposed to English in any form (TV, siblings), when he/she is in school?
Three questions within one question

✓ Will any exposure to a new language affect test scores in the native language?
✅ (1) It is important to assess a student in the native language – otherwise the data is incomplete. It is like testing vision in only one eye or hearing in only one ear.

✅ (2) There are no tests in most languages; we need to rely on a good language development history. ***
(3) A student is considered an ELL learner when he is not able to keep up with the curricular demands without some type of accommodation in English.

(4) Over time we need to factor in the possibility of language loss in L1.

(5) ALWAYS consider the history of both languages.
Which language/s to use in assessment?

If a student is “dominant” in English, is it okay to only test in English?
The fact that the student is “dominant” in English does not mean that he/she no longer has proficiency in the native language. So assessment needs to be conducted in both languages. (Kohnert, 2008; Langdon 2008)

Always consider that the language proficiency in two languages will NEVER be identical.
Best ways to “screen” an ELL student when you don’t know his/her language.

✓ What is the best way to approach a bilingual assessment/initial observation of a child in which you do not speak the language? (specifically in a school setting)
✓ Consult with the classroom teacher.
✓ Observe the student in the classroom. Any difference compared to other students who are learning English?
✓ Observe the student communicating with another student who speaks the same language (if possible). Any difference?
ANSWER

✓ Administer an initial screening in English to find out how much he/she can understand/express in the language.

✓ Depending on age, teach some concepts and observe if the student can retain the information. Revert to RtI.
Assessment necessary in L1 as well?

✓ In the past, I have been asked to assess students in English to see if they qualify for S/L services before requesting the assessment in another language. Is this an acceptable process to follow?
ANSWER

☑ If a student is learning English, you will observe that indeed he/she is not at par with monolingual English-speaking peers.

☑ You may not use the norms of tests in English.

☑ Performance in English needs to be evaluated based on factors such as exposure to English, programs attended, past history.
In all cases, if student is exposed to another language, every effort needs to be made to evaluate the student’s language skills in L1. Otherwise, you are only considering a fragment of the student’s overall language skills.

Consider language loss.
In the schools, what is the best way to handle a full evaluation of a bilingual child if you do not speak both languages?

For example: Is it more appropriate to have a bilingual resource teacher sit with you and interpret/translate an appropriate test and make a statement in the report that the data isn't normative or should an aide or resource teacher give the test in the child's language (CELF-4 Spanish)?
Best ways to evaluate a bilingual student.

✓ Should testing only be done by a bilingual SLP?
ANSWER

✓ Evaluate the student in English first.
✓ Decide for yourself about the areas that you need to assess.
  Articulation/Phonology? Expressive language? Memory? Language comprehension and processing? Any or all of the above?
Collaborate with a trained interpreter/translator who can be a resource teacher, community person.

- If there are assessments in the student’s language select those areas among the available tests. (This will be applicable to Spanish only).

- Always obtain and analyze a language sample in at least two contexts. This is the best approach.
Discuss the case with the I/T. Follow the BID process (Briefing, Interaction, Debriefing process).


✓ If there are no tests in the language, obtain and analyze a language sample using wordless books (Mayer books).
ANSWER

✓ The best is to work with a bilingual SLP, but very few SLPs are available to work with students in languages other than Spanish.

✓ You can still obtain valid information if you are careful and consider similar areas of languages across the two languages in your assessment if relevant.

✓ Remember that results will mirror the type of exposure the student has had with each language
Again, take a detailed language development history in each language.

Follow IDEA guidelines. Percentiles and SDs do not tell you the entire story. Not even the beginning for ELL students!!!

In CA unfortunately we continue to use the discrepancy model/cognitive referencing. It is a true “battle” to convince districts to look at students’ needs differently.
Assessing African-American Children

✓ Our district has been told by state auditors that no matter what, we have to abide to the Larry P. ruling for African American students. (California)

✓ We recently tested two A.A. students who were pre-lingually adopted by Caucasian parents and who lived in a 90% Caucasian community.
Assessing African-American Children

Would we still need to follow the Larry P. ruling in this case - or do you know if we would be considered in violation during an audit?
Even though the children are now living in a predominantly Caucasian environment, the Larry P. rules apply to them in CA only.

A document available through the CSHA website on SLPs’ practices in working with African-American children can be used in following guidelines on best ways to assess and work with these children. (Toya Wyatt).
ELL students’ language samples

✓ Do you have a good reference list of common characteristics of an ELL student's language sample vs. common characteristics of an ELL with a language disability student's language sample?
ELL students’ language samples

Do auditors even read the narrative of a report or just look at ethnicity and testing battery?
A language sample of an ELL student may often reflect some borrowing from the student’s first language. For example, a Spanish-speaking child may say “he fall vs. he fell down”, or “here are two house”. Some of these “errors” may be also common in children learning English.

There are so called phenomena that occur when two languages are in contact.
Burt & Dulay in the 1970’s found that students who spoke languages like Spanish or Chinese as their first language made similar errors to monolingual children when they were in the process of learning English. This is substantiated by a recent study by Paradis with children with language disorders who had various language backgrounds (2005).
In my dissertation I found that a language disorder was present when there were MORE errors than expected, not so much as WHAT errors. Still valid today.

What is most evident is the student’s difficulty in expressing ideas, in explaining his/her thoughts, word-finding difficulties more pronounced than would be expected in individual who speak two or more languages.
ANSWER

✓ Although cultural differences need to be considered, you will note that if a child has difficulty expressing him/herself in English (given adequate time), he/she may have similar challenges in his/her own language.

✓ But, evaluate the environment in which each language has developed and current use of each language, for what purposes.
ANSWER

✓ But, cultural differences need to be factored in.

✓ We need to consider styles of communication that are bound to specific linguistic/cultural groups.

✓ I cannot speak for auditors but I would hope that they would check for more than boxes.
More Specific Assessment Issues
Comparing Spanish and English performance

✓ If a child has already been in the country for several years (over 5) and is in "the CALP stage," is it appropriate to look at the English test scores?

✓ For example, an eighth-grade bilingual
Comparing Spanish and English performance

AND FURTHER

If they are in the CALP stage, can we report test scores from tests such as the CELF-4 English?
Comparing Spanish and English performance

✓ AND

✓ If a child scores in the ADVANCED range on the CELDT (a language proficiency given in CA in English), it is okay to ONLY test in English and report those scores?
It is very important to compare the student’s performance in the two languages, as is the case here. Remember that results may also be different due to different types of exposure to each language.
What we find in this example is that the student has good basic skills in Spanish (BICS and CALP), but needs more strategies in acquiring a “higher” level of "academic language" performance in English.
Once again, this is an example where test scores do not tell us the whole story. We need to go back and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the student’s overall communication abilities.

How are these skills impacting academic performance?

Consider Response to Intervention (RtI)
ANSWER

✓ We need to review progress over time. This student is not language disordered, but is one who needs to learn how to cope with higher level language. (CALP)

✓ Write your report stating that results need to be interpreted with care because the student is a second language learner of English and most tests have been normed on monolingual speakers of English.

✓ Adhere to other criteria recommended by IDEA.
Do tests tell us the whole story?

✓ Do you see any types of biases with the Preschool Language Scale-5 or other tests that work against native-Spanish speakers?
✓ Some of them seem to have a true delay/disorder, but others don’t.
✓ They seem to respond well to the test, particularly the receptive portion, but not the expressive one.
We are going back to the premise that tests cannot tell you the entire story.

We should not qualify students for services based on tests only. We should look at the total child.

Tests are only part of the whole story that the child brings to us.

The PLS tells us some things but certainly not others.
Intervention in L1?

Y/N?

✓ Is there ever a time you would NOT recommend a child have treatment in his/her first language if the child has deficits in both languages (English & native language).

✓ What would be an example of when you
ANSWER

✓ Research supports that intervention in L1 will promote greater gains in L2.
✓ Selection of language of intervention depends on a number of factors which includes the age of the student, availability of staff who can provide the service AND ultimately the student’s preference. The latter is a matter often neglected when discussing best ways to render services to ELL students.
ANSWER

✓ It need not be during each session or for all skills, remember what the goals and issues are for each student.

In no instance recommend parents and family switch to English. This has not proved to be the correct path to take. For more discussion on this topic consult Kohnert (2008), Kohnert & Derr (2004).
Bilingualism does not cause a disability and there is no research indicating it confuses children or interferes with language development.
A multi-tiered series of questions regarding intervention

A-Do you feel it is appropriate to honor a bilingual family's request to provide speech and language services in English (only)?

**ANSWER**

✓ **Yes and no.** Depends if you have a bilingual SLP who can provide services in the student’s language. If yes, work with family in making them understand that it is important to have a foundation in a language. This foundation is important in building skills in a second language.
What to do when ELL students seem to need services in L1??.

✓ Many ELLs are qualifying for services and they really need therapy in their native language. But, of course, there is a huge shortage of bilingual therapists.

✓ Do these children just sit on a wait list or would they benefit from work with an English-speaking therapist?
A waiting list is illegal.

When services cannot be provided in L1 and reasonable efforts have been made, the SLP could work with an interpreter-or work in English.

Remember—many concepts and processes are universal. What varies is the form, structure, etc…

Underlying processes are the various types of memories, attention, motivation.
I work with many children who come from Spanish speaking communities. They qualify, being delayed in both languages, but I've noticed that several of them have much more vocabulary in Spanish.

Do you recommend expanding vocabulary by labeling in both languages or could this be overwhelming for a language delayed child?
✓ Vocabulary is indeed a very important component of successful oral and written language performance.

✓ If the SLP is bilingual, the vocabulary can be reinforced using words in different activities that hopefully will be curriculum based.

✓ One session can be conducted in Spanish, for example, and another session can be conducted in English. This way there will be no confusion between the two languages.
However, the use of cognates when they exist may be useful in making students aware of each language.

- (FAMILY -familia-famille)
- (RICH -rico-riche)
- (FRUITS -frutas-fruits)
- (ELEPHANT-elefante-éléphant).
Apraxia and Family language of communication

✓ In the case of bi or multi-lingual homes, is there ever a time or with a particular disorder (apraxia, severe phonological disorder, other) when you recommend that a parent only use one language and stop the use of the other?
ANSWER

✓ No, never counsel parents to switch their language of communication with their children no matter how severe the language status of the child. Especially if the child is diagnosed with a more severe disability.

✓ Language that is used to communicate with the child should be as rich as possible. If parents switch to English (which they may not know well), they will not communicate effectively with their children.

✓ There are universals in language.
ANSWER

✓ It would be ideal to offer students services in their first language, but this is unrealistic.

✓ Provide services in English and ensure that there is follow-up with families on how they can help their children, even if they do not speak English well.
ANSWER

✓ Specifics:

✓ **APRAXIA**-encourage parents to stimulate sounds and combinations that may appear in the two languages. For example, many consonants in English exist in Spanish with the exception of /v/ ---/ʃ/---/z/---/ð/---/ŋg/---and /r/ is formed differently (There are two different /r/s in Spanish).
ANSWER

✓ Specifics: However, there are clusters and multisyllabic word combinations in both languages.

✓ If we consider other combinations of languages, the landscape might be different, but sounds and sound combination to make up words exist in all languages.
✓ Specifics:
✓ What the child needs is stimulation in any language.
✓ Some recent research indicates that students with moderate to severe disorders can handle two languages.
✓ MY EXAMPLE---- ANDY
ANSWER

✓ Specifics:

✓ AUTISM-
✓ HEARING IMPAIRMENT-

✓ Comments will be made on the spot.
✓ No matter what we need to keep in mind the principles of:
ANSWER

✓ Specifics:

✓ ONE LANGUAGE - ONE PERSON - OR ENVIRONMENT

✓ PARENTS NEED TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR CHILDREN - IT DOES NOT MATTER WHICH LANGUAGE - WHAT MATTER IS COMMUNICATION -

✓ THERE WILL BE NO INTERFERENCE AS LONG AS THE CHILD LEARNS TO ASSOCIATE THE LANGUAGE WITH THE CONTEXT/ WITH A GIVEN PERSON.
Use of multiple languages will not confuse anyone.

✓ How do you best respond to the concern that the use of multiple languages will confuse a child?
✓ We know that this is not true, but how do you best and efficiently explain this to a parent?
Children will not be confused by their exposure to many languages. What matters is where and how each language is used.

There are more bilingual and multilingual individuals compared to monolinguals on this planet.

Strategies discussed in the previous question will be helpful in enabling a child to grow up bilingually or mutilingually.
ANSWER

✓ Attitude of the community is very important

✓ (Additive vs. Subtractive environment)

(Peal and Lambert, 1962)
Parents as language facilitators at low cost of time and $$

✓ Do you have any good suggestions for promoting literacy and language with parents who have a very demanding work schedule and may or may not be able to read?
Parents can help children with literacy activities that do not necessarily mean sitting with a book.

- Alternatives are story telling, singing, and any activity that helps the child experience language and enhance communication.
Preamble - REFERENCES

✔ Any general suggestions for working with English Language Learners for both teachers and therapists?

✔ Please refer to references.
REFERENCES


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WHAT WILL YOU TAKE WITH YOU?

1:

2:

3: