

DESIGNING EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTION FOR YOUNG ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS



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Sandra Hess Robbins, M.Ed.

Sophia Hubbell, MA.T.

**Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Research and
Training (CEECRT)**

Kent State University

THE NEED...



- United States
 - 5 million English Language Learners
 - ELL increase of 104% in 1990s
- By 2030 less than 50% of children under the age of 5 will be European-American
- 26% of infants and preschoolers enrolled in Head Start speak a primary language other than English



THE GAP

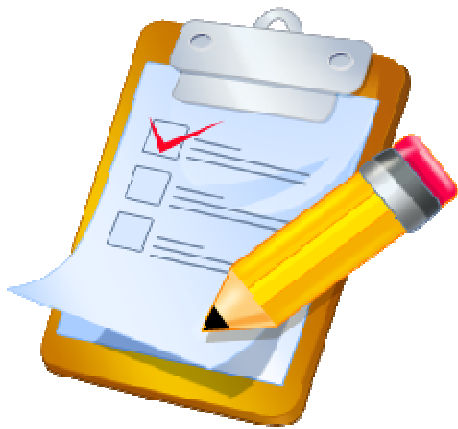
An achievement gap exists between ELL students and monolingual English speaking students, even after ELL students have spent five to six years in U.S. schools.

Something needs to be done.



TODAY'S TOPICS

1. Family involvement
2. Assessment
3. Instruction



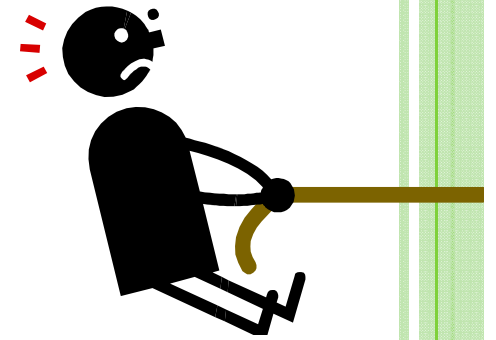
FAMILY INVOLVEMENT



For years, research has demonstrated that parental involvement is critical to children's academic growth and development (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Landry & Smith, 2005)



CHALLENGES



- Different expectations regarding the role of families and teachers in children's education
- School personnel viewing ELL parents as unable to become involved
- Unfamiliarity with the school system
- **Lack of English proficiency**
- Parental education level
- Prior experiences with school staff that lead to misunderstandings



FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

- Traditional views of family involvement are changing
- The field has shifted from “professionals as experts” to “families as experts” with a focus on building partnerships
- Families have a wealth of knowledge and experiences that can serve as valuable resources

“Early childhood programs can establish effective relationships with ELL parents, but they will need to expand their methods to include, honor, and respect the cultural and linguistic strengths that families possess” (Espinosa, 2010, p87)



BEST PRACTICES FOR FAMILY INVOLVEMENT



- School personnel should provide
 - Opportunities for parental input
 - Information about curriculum, instruction, and standards
 - Assistance to parents in understanding placement and assessment measures
 - Non-judgmental outreach and interaction
(Coltrane, 2003; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004)

- School personnel should focus on...
 - Parents wishes for children
 - Roles parents are comfortable assuming
(Trumbull et al, 2001; Van Velsor & Orozco, 2007)





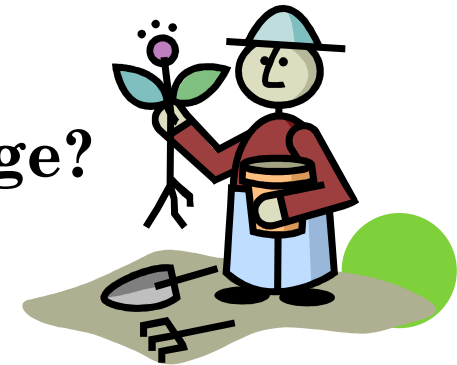
FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE

“Too often we focus on what is lacking in children’s home environment rather than on the potential resources that might exist in them” (Diamond, Wang, & Gomez, 2004).

Funds of Knowledge are the historical and cultural bodies of knowledge connected to a person or family



What are your funds of knowledge?



LEARNING ABOUT A FAMILY'S FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE

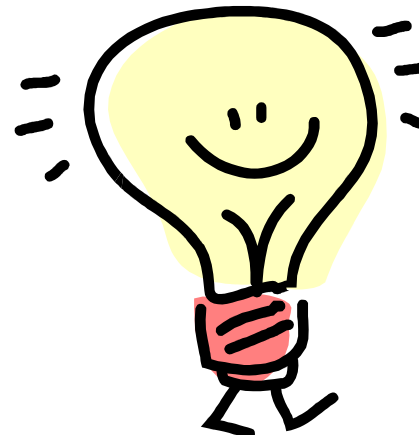
- Not a single interaction but a process of contacts through which a caring partnership is developed
- Through genuine dialogue and active listening, people come to understand another person's perspective

“Caring interpersonal relationships are characterized by patience, persistence, facilitation, validation, and empowerment for participants” (Gay, 2000, p.47)



LEARNING ABOUT A FAMILY'S FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE

- When talking directly to the family is a challenge...
 - Visit the community
 - Learn from people familiar with the culture
 - Learn from the media (<http://www.culturegrams.com/>)
 - Carefully gather information from both primary and secondary sources
- In the classroom...
 - Start a cultural and expert journal
 - Create an alphabet book
 - Collect environmental print(Barone & Xu, 2008)



OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIALOGUE



- Pick-up/drop-off
- Time for parents to spend in classroom
- Getting to know you conferences
- Open houses
- Positive news
- Questions for parents to ask children
- Encourage book/story sharing
- Acknowledge strengths, concerns, feelings
- Parents as book readers
- Parents as translators



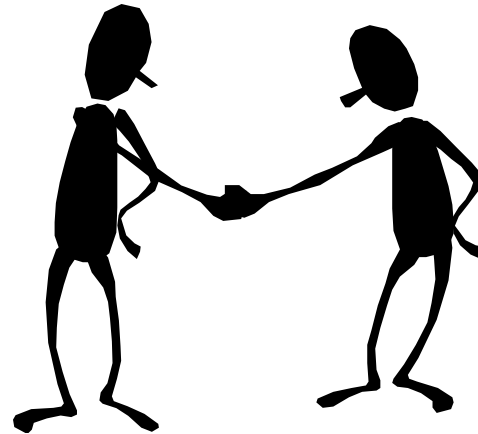
DIALOGUE BLOCKERS

- Sharing problems about the child without acknowledging strengths
- Insisting the child and/or family only communicate in English
- Using labels to describe parents
- Punishing the child for not returning forms or bringing in resources



PRACTICAL APPROACHES FOR AVOIDING MISUNDERSTANDING

- Be literal
- Don't make assumptions
 - School procedures
- Communicate expectations clearly
- Check for understanding
- Provide visual/physical supports
 - Red paper
 - Total physical response



RESOLVING CULTURAL CONFLICTS

R - Reflect

E - Explain

R - Reason

U - Understanding

N - Negotiate



DESIGNING ASSESSMENT

- Family involvement is crucial
- The assessor must have an understanding of language structure and language acquisition
- Child behavior and culture shock has to be taken into consideration
- Authentic assessment practices are critical



LANGUAGE STRUCTURE

- Syntax
- Semantics
- Phonology



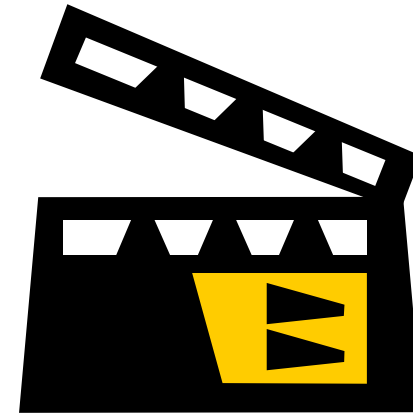
As language users engage with English, they are continually drawing upon emerging understandings of all three features of language structure

At the Pasar



STAGES IN DEVELOPMENT OF AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

1. Silent/Receptive stage
2. Early production
3. Speech emergence
4. Intermediate fluency
5. Advanced fluency



Stages of Language Development

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eoca1Ou_6TE



ELLs IN THE SILENT PERIOD

- The significance of patience
- *“A child in a process, not a child with a problem”*
- Know how language is used in the home
- Provide meaningful reasons to use English
- Not a time of worry, but a time of “watchful attitude” and “unhurried time”



STRATEGIES USED BY ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

- Assume that what people are saying is related to the situation you are observing or experiencing
- Learn and use some expressions you understand; make the most of what you've got
- Work on the big things and save the details for later
- Interact with others; act as if you understand what is happening, even if you do not
- Elicit and expect help from friends
- Use of interlanguage



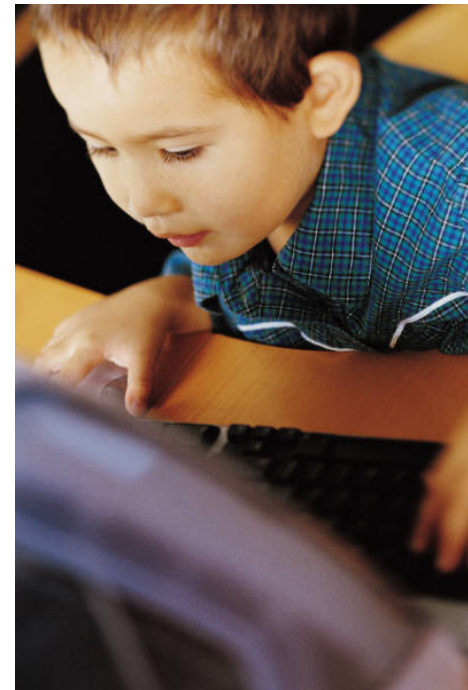
ORAL LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

- Acquiring is different from learning
- Receptive language precedes expressive language
- First language supports second language learning
- Rich communication environments should be facilitated
- Socially outgoing can be misinterpreted as “good language learner”
- We do not acquire language by being corrected



BEHAVIOR CONSIDERATIONS

- ELLs have historically been, and continue to be overrepresented in special education
- ELLs may exhibit certain behaviors similar to children with disabilities
- ELLs are adjusting to being placed in an unfamiliar environment (culture shock)



COMMON BEHAVIORS



- Slow to begin tasks
- Slow to finish tasks
- Forgetful
- Inattentive
- Hyperactive
- Impulsive
- Distractible
- Disruptive
- Disorganized



ASSESSMENT

- Non-discriminatory Evaluation (IDEA)
 - Test in heritage language
 - Use culturally sensitive tests and procedures
 - Use valid assessment tools
 - Use a team of evaluators and multiple sources of information (authentic assessment)

**High quality assessment practices
transcend age, gender, ability, and
culture**



ACCOMMODATIONS STRATEGIES FOR ELLS

- Reword or expand instructions and check for understanding
- Define key words both in English and in the student's native language
- Present items and directions through graphics and pictorial representations
- Allow demonstration of mastery in alternative ways (e.g. cooperative group projects, use of manipulatives, responses in native language)
- Allow extended response time
- Allow oral presentations or dramatic performances



ACCOMMODATION STRATEGIES FOR ELLS

- Use visual materials, real-life examples, hands-on activities, story maps, pictures, facial expressions, and gestures to elicit responses
- Speak slowly and use simple vocabulary
- Ask questions that require minimal response
- Allow response choice, provide context clues, and use tests items with predictable language formats
- When scoring, allow for differences in English dialects
- Avoid penalties for using few words or not providing details
- Provide opportunities for taking practice tests



DESIGNING INSTRUCTION

- Language preservation
- Start with the environment
- Use multiple means of representation
- Focus on literacy
- Think aloud strategies
- Research based practices



FIRST LANGUAGE PRESERVATION (GETTING IT STRAIGHT)

Will a child be confused by being exposed to more than one language?

BEING BILINGUAL DOES NOT CAUSE DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

- Focusing on English only can adversely affect the learning and social development of the child and family (often associated with the child's culture and identity)
- Research has shown that children with disabilities can function bilingually as effectively as typically developing peers
- The language of communication with the child's family provides important understandings about language



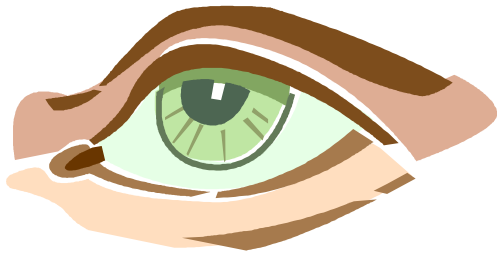
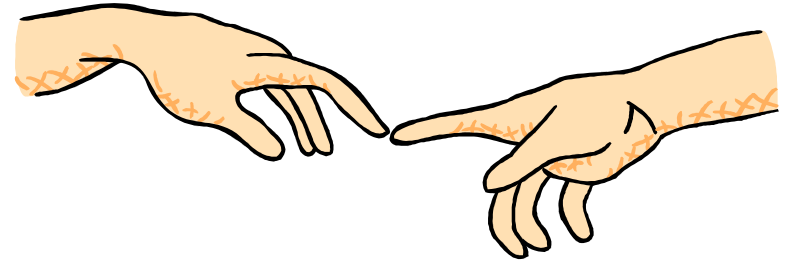
WHAT SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS LOOK LIKE

- One on one interactions
- Drawing and narrations
- Role playing
- Fixed-response or fill-in-the-blank questions
- Predictable games
- Wordless picture books
- Language experience approach tasks
- ELLs sharing culture and customs
- Use of photographs
- High-use terminology and phrases



MULTIPLE MEANS OF REPRESENTATION

- Auditory
- Visual
- Kinesthetic
- Tactile



FOCUS ON LITERACY

- Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are interrelated
- Language leads to content learning and content learning can facilitate language development

ALL children benefit from rich opportunities to use language meaningfully



THINK ALOUD STRATEGIES FOR READ ALOUDS

- Previewing the text
- Getting/activating background knowledge
- Making connections
- Predicting
- Visualizing
- Applying knowledge of text genre and structure
- Determining important details
- Organizing ideas
- Summarizing ideas
- Making inferences
- Transferring literacy knowledge and strategies learned from a native language
- Self-monitoring
- Applying fix-up strategies



12 RESEARCH BASED PRACTICES



- 1. Recruit bilingual paraprofessionals, assistants, family members, community volunteers, an/or older students
- 2. Incorporate home language into the daily classroom activities
- 3. Use children personal histories to create identity texts
- 4. Use picture books and photo albums to make up stories with the children



12 RESEARCH BASED PRACTICES



- 5. Use small-group read alouds
- 6. Having young children take pictures of the “world outside of school”
- 7. Review key concepts and vocabulary before reading books
- 8. Make connections between the content of the story and the children’s own life experiences



12 RESEARCH BASED PRACTICES



- 9. Keep reading time short
- 10. Use dialogic reading techniques
- 11. Know which stage of English acquisition the child is in
- 12. After reading, provide opportunities to use the new vocabulary, make connections between their own life and the text



RESOURCES

○ BOOKS

- Espinosa, L. (2010). *Getting it right for young children from diverse backgrounds: Applying research to improve practice*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- Gonzalez-Mena, J. (2010). *50 strategies for communication and working with diverse families* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.
- California Department of Education. (2009). *Preschool English learners: Principles and practices to promote language, literacy, and learning* (2nd ed.). Sacramento: author.

○ ONLINE RESOURCES

- <http://www.asha.org/SLP/assessment/Assessment-Introduction/> (American Speech and Hearing Association, Assessment Directory)
- <http://www.colorincolorado.org/> (Colorin Colorado – a website for educators and families)
- <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/> (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition)
- <http://www.researchconnections.org/childcare/resources/?q=Dual+language+learners> (Child Care and Early Education Research Connections)
- http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Dual%20Language%20Learners/DLL_%20Resources/ProgramPreparednessChecklistVersion3.1.pdf (Head Start Program Preparedness Checklist)



ONLINE LANGUAGE TOOLS

- Transparent Language: www.transparent.com
- The Internet Picture Dictionary:
www.pdictionary.com
- Babel Fish Translation:
<http://babelfish.altavista.com/tr>
- Foreign Word.com: www.foreignword.com
- Your Dictionary.com:
www.yourdictionary.com/languages.html





QUESTIONS??

srobbin4@kent.edu

sophiehubbell@yahoo.com

