Intersections of Language and Culture in Development and Learning: Promising Futures

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Report Terminology and Methodology

Dual Language Learners (DLLs)

English Learners (ELs)

Birth 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21

years
New Demographic Reality is the Dispersal of ELs Across the Nation.
Changing Demographics

- Between 2002-03 and 2013-14 the DLL/EL population increased by 20% across the country.
- Dispersal of ELS across the country
- Increase number of states with ELs
- Significant concentrations at local agency/school sites
Top 10 languages spoken by English learners (aged 5-18 and enrolled in school)

Majority of US DLLs/ELs are US-born

Proportions of U.S. Population Speaking Only English vs. Language Other than English, 1980 and 2010

SOURCE: Data from Rumbaut and Massey (2013)
Conclusions Related to Demography of DLLs and ELs

• The cultures, languages, and experiences of English learners are highly diverse.

• Many English learners grow up in contexts that expose them to a number of risk factors (e.g., low levels of parental education, low family income, refugee status, homelessness) that can have a negative impact on their school success, especially when these disadvantages are concentrated.

• This same population has significant assets including their bilingual skills, two parent families, strong extended family and community supports and positive attitudes towards education and educators.
All children have the capacity to learn 2+ languages.

Strong L1 language skills support learning English.

Learning two languages is associated with improved cognition, executive functioning, and social interactions.

Language competence varies between individuals and groups of individuals, associated with family, community and other development and learning contexts (Asset Factors and Risk Factors).
Systematic exposure to English and ongoing support of L1 is critical in aligned culturally responsive instruction.
Family Engagement

- Family engagement has positive benefits on language proficiency, social skills, test scores, and higher education enrollment rates.

- Outreach on the part of ECE programs, schools and staff is critical.
Pre-K–12 Program Models

English-only

Obsolete

Bilingual

Preferred
Policies Matter:

• They set assumptions and expectations for what and how English Learners should learn in schools.

• Over the past 50 years, federal policies in particular have sought to support EL academic learning outcomes by addressing the reality that students with limited English proficiency face a significant barrier to mastery of subject matter content in schools.

• Recent ECE expansion has generated related policy to practice assumptions and expectations for DLLs.
As the population of English learners continues to diversify, limitations of current data sources compromise the capacity to provide a more comprehensive description of the population’s characteristics for policy makers, administrators, and teachers who have responsibility for their education.

Most research focuses on Latino Spanish speaking ELs who tend to be low-income.

Little attention to background characteristics that may impact language/academic development.

Little attention to programmatic, classroom or schooling factors that may impact EL student outcomes.

Majority of research on elementary-level ELs, little on DLLs, middle or high school.
Umansky & Reardon (2014) and Valentino & Reardon (2015) studied language proficiency and academic achievement outcomes of Latino ELs in **different types of dual language programs** (Transitional, Developmental, Two-Way, and English mainstream) in California.

Importance of study is control for parental choice: all parents in control (English instruction) and treatment (dual language types) requested dual language for child.

**Findings:**

- Umansky & Reardon - “ELs in bilingual/DL programs have a higher long-term likelihood of becoming proficient in English, meeting an English language arts threshold, and being reclassified relative to ELs in English only programs.”

- Valentino & Reardon – “By seventh grade, students in DI [dual immersion/Two-way] and TB [transitional bilingual] have much higher ELA [English language arts] scores than those in EI [English instruction] classrooms… test scores of ELs in DI programs far outpace those of ELs in other programs.”
Major Recommendations: Research

- Although research points to the importance of family engagement, national surveys suggest there are lower rates of family engagement in K-12 schools for EL families compared to English-speaking families—quality and dosage data unavailable.

- Case studies of effective schools and districts demonstrate including leaders and documenting a common commitment to high expectations for all students; specific investment analysis of teacher collaboration and ongoing, focused professional development; implementation of a coherent instructional program, Pre-K to K-12 for students.

- Special DLL/EL populations: Disabilities, Native American, Homeless, Migrant
Contact/ Access Information

To download the *Promising Futures* report and view related materials: 

A new practitioner toolkit based on the “Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures” report is up and running. You can find it housed on the National Academies Press website here: 
[https://www.nap.edu/resource/24677/toolkit/](https://www.nap.edu/resource/24677/toolkit/) (Toolkit available in Spanish)

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