Emerging Bilingual Students: Understanding and Teaching to Their Potential

Kathy Escamilla
State English Learners Alliance Conference
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“Becoming bilingual better, not faster”
A Sign of the Past Decade of Federal and State Education Policy

“Becoming biliterate better, not faster”
The Need for a Counter Narrative

The Nation

* How to close the achievement ‘gap’
* A monolingual ‘norm’
* A monolingual assessment system and common core standards (no standard for biliteracy)
* Universalist norms of teaching
* A fear of diversity especially linguistic diversity

The Work of Educators of ELLs and their Allies

* The ‘gap’ in vision and a true global focus – redefine the ‘gap’
* A ‘new normal’
* Biliteracy, biculturalism and bilingualism as the ‘core’
* Norms for Teaching Emergent Bilinguals
* Social justice - advocacy

“Becoming biliterate better, not faster”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Enrollment</th>
<th>Growth from 95-96</th>
<th>LEP Enrollment</th>
<th>Growth from 95-96</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>570,544</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>38,748</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>579,939</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>33,559</td>
<td>-13.4%</td>
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<td>1997-98</td>
<td>541,346</td>
<td>-5.1%</td>
<td>30,768</td>
<td>-20.6%</td>
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<td>1998-99</td>
<td>542,809</td>
<td>-4.9%</td>
<td>41,335</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
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<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>545,033</td>
<td>-4.5%</td>
<td>43,845</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
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<td>-4.4%</td>
<td>47,382</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>552,144</td>
<td>-3.2%</td>
<td>44,129</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
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<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>554,017</td>
<td>-2.9%</td>
<td>52,588</td>
<td>35.7%</td>
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<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>551,290</td>
<td>-3.4%</td>
<td>61,695</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>552,342</td>
<td>-3.2%</td>
<td>59,908</td>
<td>54.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>536,079</td>
<td>-6.0%</td>
<td>65,824</td>
<td>69.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:**

**August 2008**
The Status of Bilingualism in the World vs. the U.S.

- **World**
  - Worldwide more people speak English as a second language than speak English as a native language.
  - **50%** of all people in the world are bilingual.
  - Worldwide quest to learn English is a quest for bilingualism.
  - If you can speak Spanish and English you can communicate with **80%** of the people on the planet.

- **United States**
  - **10%** of educated people in the U.S. are bilingual.
  - Only **20%** of U.S. citizens have passports and have traveled outside of the U.S.
  - Political pressure to declare English the official language.
  - The U.S. is only major superpower in the world without being very worldly and the only first world country to not require bilingualism.

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The Benefits of Bilingualism/Biliteracy

Some Benefits of bilingualism

* Improved ability to attend to important information

* Better at multi-tasking than monolingual individuals (increased executive functioning)

* Increased earning potential – According to AOL Jobs Report: anywhere between 5 and 20% more per hour than their monolingual counterparts

* Delayed onset of Alzheimer’s disease (5-6 years)

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The achievement gap is larger in states with restrictive language policies (AZ, CA, MA) even though the average achievement for the states has remained stable.

The achievement gap is particularly high in Massachusetts despite the state having average scores that are among the highest in the nation.

Taken together, their findings suggest that restrictive language policies (read more English) have had a negative impact on the achievement gap.

Rumberger & Tran (2010)
**Rumberger & Tran (in press)**

- Bilingual policy is increasingly more salient in **boosting** achievement as the proportion of Hispanics in a state increases.

- Comparing NAEP 4th grade achievement between New Mexico and Arizona:
  - New Mexico = bilingual emphasis, large % Hispanic
  - Arizona = bilingual restriction, large % Hispanic

- New Mexico
  - 13 points higher on NAEP reading (.35)
  - 18 points higher on NAEP math (.50)
  - 17 points for higher on NAEP science (.61)

- What are the implications for Oregon
  - 40% of 200 districts in Oregon have 90% of ELLs (heavily impacted/blessed with diversity)
  - 60,000 ELLs in Oregon and 80% speak Spanish

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What do we do?
Understanding and Teaching to the Potential

- The New Normal – Simultaneous Bilingual Children
- Moving beyond – “Good Teaching is Good Teaching Paradigms”
- Advocating for a more equitable assessment system for EBs
- Teaching for Social Justice (including preparing teachers and administrators)

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The New Normal: Simultaneous Bilingualism

* 67% of children who enter U.S. schools as emerging bilinguals are born in the U.S.
* 85% of these children speak Spanish
* Many have never traveled outside of the U.S. – this is a stable community!
* **Simultaneous Bilingualism**
  * No one definition of what constitutes simultaneous bilingualism but it is generally thought to be exposure to two languages before age 5
* **Sequential Bilingualism**
  * Exposure to two languages after age 6
  * Acquiring a second language after a first language has a firm foundation
* Many bilingual/dual language programs have sequential frameworks.
* Most of the children are simultaneous bilinguals.

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The need to shift paradigms: Who are our children?

Sequential bilingualism – Clear and dominant L1
Search for a dominant language

Increased understanding of simultaneous bilingualism where the first language may be ‘bilingualism’

Adapted from Escamilla, 2004

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The need to shift paradigms: Do our programs fit our children?

Sequential framework:
One language must be developed well before a second language is introduced.

Criteria for transition

Bilingualism and biliteracy is possible and a routine around the world where two languages are learned together.

Why not paired literacy?

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Adapted from Escamilla, 2004
The need to shift paradigms: Are our programs comprehensive?

Focus on Spanish Literacy only.

Delay English literacy for 2-3 years.

Focus in ELD on listening and speaking or sheltered content.

Exit to English only.

Paired literacy instruction beginning in kindergarten.

Literacy based ESL

No exit from the program.

Adapted from Escamilla, 2004

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A visual for simultaneous bilingualism

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Toward a Paradigm of Normalization

* Normal bilingual behaviors may be viewed as deficits from a sequential bilingual perspective because:
  * Parallel monolingual assessment
  * Interference vs. interlanguage
  * Cross language processing
  * Code-switching
  * Language shift

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Interference vs. Interlanguage

* **Interference**: Occurs in 2nd language acquisition when vocabulary or syntax patterns from a learner’s first language cause errors in second language performance. The term is used largely in the United States and decreasingly in the rest of the world because of its negative and derogatory connotations (Encyclopedia of Bilingualism).

* **Interlanguage**: An intermediate form of language used by second language learners in the process of learning a language. Interlanguage contains some transfers or borrowing from the first language, and is an approximate system with regard to grammar and communicating meaning. (Encyclopedia of Bilingualism).

* **Interlanguage** = L1 is a Scaffold
* **Interference** = L1 is a Barrier

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Interference or Interlangauge?

* Este es red, ¿verdad teacher?
* Kimberly está eskipeando.
* Guardé mi game boy en mi cubby.
* Let’s go. ¡Vámonos!
A New Analysis

- **Interference**
- Tex-Mex
- No clear L1 dominance
- Semilingual
- Spanglish
- Cross-language confusion

- **Interlanguage**
- Language is learned in context
- Overgeneralization of grammar is normal
- Some things can’t be translated
- Added emphasis

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Intereference in Action

* José knows 3 colors in Spanish and 3 in English (same 3), he is labeled ‘limited’ in L1 and L2
* Bill know 5 colors all in English. He is labeled as ‘average.’
* Who knows more?
* Our current paradigms are deficit oriented with regard to simultaneous bilingualism.
* We need to develop an asset based theory about simultaneous bilingualism.

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Language Interference or Cross-Language Strategies?

The tree little pika

My story is about of tree pika and 1 job ferro. The job fire down the house of pika. Den the little pika go connin to the house of his brother a sea goat Japan to be house. And yes brother scan o que ferro job. Ten the job go to the house of the other pika and the house go daun. Then the 2 little pika go out his brother and 1 say goat Japan to the house of 1 job and the house of the 2 pika. Then the job go to da odar ou and the other house is of labrilloes a ji can deri barna.

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Deficits vs. Strengths

* Spanish Phonics
* Piks for pigs
* Jis for his
* Guat for what
* The house of paja - The straw house
* Lob (lobo) for wolf
* Paja for straw
* Feroz for ferocious

* Spanish Syntax

* Lexical code-switches

* Communicative Competence!

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Good teaching is good teaching. And, teachers don’t need to adjust their teaching to individual student’s learning styles.”

Dr. Daniel Willingham, Cognitive Psychologist & Neuroscientist
Professor, University of Virginia

“Becoming biliterate better, not faster”
Universal good teaching principles MUST be modified

* Strategies that can improve student performance, in general, in the case of high performing states such as Massachusetts, are insufficient for Emerging Bilinguals and have resulted in a higher achievement gap (Rumberger & Tran, 2010)

* Some aspects of effective instruction apply to all children, however, literacy instruction MUST be modified for ELLs (Goldenberg, 2008)

* ELLs have unique needs that merit systematic attention in literacy instruction to insure. Balanced literacy needs a different balance for ELLs O’Day (2009)
Balanced Literacy Study (O’Day, 2009)

- 3-year
- 3rd – 5th Grade students
- San Diego, CA
- Outcome: Reading Comprehension
- Mixed-methods
  - Effectiveness of balanced literacy (quantitative)
  - Documentation of instructional approaches (qualitative)
    - 2-years; 133 educators

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Balance in Approach & Balance in Language Domain

Speaking, Reading, Writing, Listening, Viewing, Representing

Teacher Support

Student Responsibility

High

Low

High

Low

Modeled   Shared   Guided   Collaborative   Independent

Explicit - Direct       Process - Workshop

“Becoming biliterate better, not faster”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note Patterns</th>
<th>Combined</th>
<th>Non-EL</th>
<th>EL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Higher level questions/meaning of text</td>
<td>1.606*</td>
<td>2.335*</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>1.633*</td>
<td>2.728*</td>
<td>.803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountable Talk</td>
<td>1.043*</td>
<td>1.121*</td>
<td>.777</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Elaborated Model – Teacher/Student Interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Non-EL</th>
<th>EL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telling</td>
<td>-1.438*</td>
<td>1.427*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion/Conversation</td>
<td>0.576</td>
<td>1.614*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Aloud</td>
<td>0.997</td>
<td>-0.812</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

1. Impact of key instructional strategies shown to be effective for monolingual English speakers may be somewhat attenuated for EBs – although the direction of the influence is generally the same.

2. **Telling** has a positive influence for EBs.

3. Opportunities to engage in **discussion and conversation** benefits EBs (oral language development fostered in meaningful context).

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Assessment: The Need for Authenticity and Equity

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Normalizing Holistic Bilingualism: A Metaphor (Genesee)

* The sprinter and high jumper concentrate on one event, and may excel in it.

* The hurdler concentrates on two different skills. The hurdler will rarely be unable to sprint as fast as the sprinter or jump as high as the high jumper.

* The hurdler is not a worse athlete than the other two. They are simply different.

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If you teach in two languages, your bilingual models should include assessment in two languages

* The most insidious threat to equitable education and the Emerging Bilingual children is the current high stakes testing environment (Figueroa & Valdés, 2004).

* Sadly, it seems that our future is likely to include MORE assessment for our Emerging Bilingual Students not less and likely the bulk of this assessment will compare Emerging Bilingual children to monolingual English children and conclude that there is a continuing gap.

* We must work to make sure that assessment practices are equitable and this means biliterate assessment AND interpretation of current assessments with a biliterate lens.

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Creating more Equitable Assessments

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How might we work for more equitable assessment?

Biliteracy Zones for Those with 3 Years Complete Data, 2008

Percent

Cohort 1: 81%
Cohort 2: 80%
Cohort 3: 89%

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Importance of a Bilingual Lens
ILP Study (Hopewell & Escamilla, 2011)

Research Questions

* How many EB students in three Colorado schools require an ILP at the end of 3rd grade when only English literacy criteria (DRA2) are applied?

* What happens to students’ ILP requirement when only Spanish language literacy criteria (EDL2) are applied to the same group of students?

* What happens to the same students’ ILP requirements when a Trajectory toward Biliteracy is applied?

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## Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students requiring an Individual Literacy Plan (ILP) (n = 364)</th>
<th>English language reading scores only – DRA2</th>
<th>Spanish language reading scores only – EDL2</th>
<th>Trajectory toward biliteracy – EDL2 + DRA2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent <strong>Requiring</strong> ILP</td>
<td>92% (n=335)</td>
<td>81% (n=295)</td>
<td>62% (n=225)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent <strong>Not Requiring</strong> ILP</td>
<td>8% (n=29)</td>
<td>19% (n=69)</td>
<td>38% (n=139)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A holistic interpretation results in 110/364 (30%) fewer students requiring an ILP!

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Valdés & Figueroa (1994)

“When a bilingual individual confronts a monolingual test... both the test taker and the test are asked to do something they cannot. The bilingual test taker cannot perform like a monolingual. The monolingual test cannot ‘measure’ in the other language.” (p.87)
If you only teach in English – assessments must be valid culturally and linguistically.
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What about Social Justice?

• For the culture of the teacher and school to be in the consciousness of the child, the culture of the child must first be in the consciousness of the teacher!

* Good teaching methods start with who the children are and not what the method is! (Leanna Trail, 1993)

* Many of our school climates are hostile for Spanish speaking students.
Social Justice Issues in Schools

* Manifest themselves in overt ways:
  * “Our Mexican parents are good at making babies, they are just not good at raising them.”
  * “They don’t get any wetter than this.”
  * “Hold their welfare checks until they send their kids to school.”
  * “Ignorance is prevalent in our school, most of our parents are Mexican.”

* School spirit and whose culture?
  * St. Patrick’s Day and School Spirit
  * Cinco de mayo – no so much

* Why aren’t we outraged?

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Social Justice Issues in Schools

* Manifest themselves in covert ways:
  * Accountability
    * Middle class schools we are accountable to the parents.
    * In poor schools we are accountable to the ‘state’ to ‘NCLB’ but not the parents.
  * In the “new” RtI triangle
    * Upside down for schools with many ELLs, poor kids and Latinos
    * 80% will need an intervention?????
  * Reading Intervention Programs for ELLs
    * SPED
    * ELL
    * Struggling Readers

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Social Justice

* Covert
* ELD instruction must focus on academic language
  * Saunders & Goldenberg (2010) – focus in ELD on academic language is a compelling hypothesis – but a hypothesis nonetheless since NO STUDY THAT WE KNOW HAS PUT IT TO THE TEST (p. 52).
* Academic language rhetoric
  * Only for ELLs or poor children
  * No one’s first language
* THERE IS NO DISCOURSE ABOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE NEW COMMON CORE STANDARDS OR THEIR PROPOSED ASSESSMENTS

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As we move forward....

The creation of a counter-narrative will not be easy but IT MUST BE DONE.

• The formation of collaborative such as the ELL collaborative here in Oregon is an EXCELLENT start
• The having of conferences such as this one is an excellent idea to get people together to have courageous conversations and to create concrete plans.
• Oregon is becoming a leader in the creation of a counter-narrative - keep it up!

* ¡Sí se puede!