A Holistic Approach to Bilingual Writing Assessment

Implications for Teachers of Emerging Bilingual Writers

Teresa Tolento
English Language Acquisition Program Specialist
Salem-Keizer Public Schools
Friday, March 15, 2013
The New American Reality - YouTube.flv
New American Reality

1 out of 4 babies born today in the U.S. will be Spanish-speaking.
Goals

Understand...

- that we need a holistic approach to assess the writing of emergent bilingual students

- how a holistic assessment tool provides more accurate information about writing strengths and needs

- how a holistic bilingual lens can change educators’ perceptions about linguistically diverse students
Monolingual vs. Bilingual

Monolingual child

- Knows about 4,000 English words before entering Kindergarten
- Well-equipped for instruction as organized in our schools.

Bilingual child

- Knows words in two languages (codes)—concepts are distributed across languages
- This student is not as well-equipped for instruction as organized in our schools.
Turn and Talk

- What is word?
The Need for a Holistic Approach

- A bilingual student’s experiences and knowledge cannot be measured or understood by analyzing each language separately.

- The totality of a person’s literacy skills and knowledge may be distributed across languages and cultures.
### Parallel Monolingualism vs Holistic Bilingualism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel monolingualism</th>
<th>Holistic bilingualism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing abilities that transfer across languages are not recognized or are considered errors.</td>
<td>Errors are seen as <strong>predictable patterns</strong> that are part of biliteracy development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment is administered and analyzed in only one language.</td>
<td>Assessment is administered in both languages and analyzed together for cross-language comparison.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilinguals are expected to perform all linguistic tasks <strong>equally well</strong> in both languages.</td>
<td>Bilinguals may perform some tasks better in one language than in another.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A holistic assessment tool provides more accurate information.

The Literacy Squared Writing Rubric

- Captures the biliteracy development of bilingual children
- Analyzes writing quantitatively and qualitatively
- Looks at both language writing samples side-by-side
- Recognizes linguistic approximations as strengths
Changing educators’ perceptions about linguistically diverse students

Recognizing...

- that approximations and cross-language transfer are evidence of resourcefulness

- students use multiple cross-language strategies when learning to write in Spanish and English
Bilingual Writing Strategies

- Discourse-level bilingual strategies
  - Cross-language *rhetorical structures* (first, next, last)
  - Cross-language use of *punctuation* (me gusta “basketball” or ¡Run fast!)
Lo que ami me gusta hacer cuando no estoy en la escuela es jugar con mi perro. A correr y la otra cosa que me gusta hacer es jugar a video juegos.

What a like to do at recess is to play soccer. I like to play soccer because we can run as fast and kick the ball as inside so want and people.
Lo mejor en escuela Hoover

A mí me gusta la escuela por qué lo mejor cuando acercas actividades todos juntos por ejemplo cuando hiciéramos lo sest rod tin soldiers y cuando hiciéramos el d till hock por so me gusta mucho la escuela a trii. Cuando bumas a pares so pienso que fue lo mejor porque así puedo co bi. co a gas. A ti te gusta el I socue

The best thing

What is ou best thing.

My best thing is hat I m in the s class b ause Soter is in my class and e is he bs teacher because he gives us candy and we do parties outside and w se movie. W is ou favorite thing.
Sentence-level bilingual strategies

- Bi-directional syntax transfer
- Word-order, subject omission (the bike of my sister)
- Literal translation (agarre todas bien)
- Codeswitching (no puedo hablar in just one language)
The best thing that has ever happened to me is when I went to the hospital of Portland to go see my new sibling named Joshua he was born on the month of October 2012 he is and then they go shopping and the they go back home and take Gary a shower
■ Word-level bilingual strategies
  ■ Code-switching—‘voy a la store’
  ■ Loan-words—‘el mol’, ‘baika’
  ■ Nativized words—esplachate, quitie, parqueadero, puchó
...la mejor cosa que me ha pasado
...asiendo el play de Goldilocks y los tres ositos me...
Phoneme-level bilingual strategies

- L1 to L2 phonetic transfer (japi)
- L2 to L1 phonetic transfer
- Within word mixing of phonetic codes-combined spelling conventions from each language to approximate a single word
I like to play wet may friends and may friends or nails and we like to play a day at rises by cars I like to have fun and play out at rises eat lot or fan wet may friends
he is serious.

he nose koraty

in the hole integer word

People said that the what a rison.
Language Interference or Cross-Language Strategies?

The tree little piks
My story is about of tree piks and 1 lobo feroz. The lob tiro dawn the house of paja. Den the little pig go roning to the house of jis brotter a sai guat japen to he house. And jes rotter scai o que feroz lob. Ten the lob go to the house of the oder pig and the house go daune. Then the 2 little piks go guit jis brotter and hi saw guat japen to the house of 1 pik and the house of the 2 pik. Then the lob go to da oder house and the oder house is of ladrillos a ji can deribarla.
Turn and Talk

- What are this child’s strengths?
Deficits vs. Strengths

- **Spanish Phonics**
  - Piks for pigs
  - Jis for his
  - Guat for what

- **Spanish Syntax**
  - The house of paja—The straw house

- **Lexical code-switches**
  - Lob (lobo) for wolf
  - Paja for straw
  - Feroz for ferocious

- **Communicative Competence!**
Bilingual Writing
Findings from the Literacy Squared Research Project

- EB writers **positively** transfer what they know across languages
- **Bilingual living produces bilingual writing.** Bilingual living creates the need for the use of code switching in written expression
- There is a **high correspondence** across languages with regard to content and punctuation
- EB writers use **multiple strategies** to communicate in two languages
- The use of bilingual strategies is **rule-governed**
Review

- A monolingual rubric cannot accurately measure the writing skills of an emergent bilingual.
- The Literacy Squared writing rubric gives us more robust information about strengths and what to teach.
- Expanding our knowledge about bilingual strategies can help change deficit notions about emerging bilinguals.
Practice