Some sample demographics
- In the year 2000, 15% of the U.S. population between 5-17 had difficulty speaking English.
- ELL students constitute a relatively young group: over 44% of limited English proficient students are enrolled in PK-3rd grade.
- The Spanish-speaking population alone is projected to reach 51 million by the year 2025.

Topical Agenda
- Second-language literacy development
- One ELL student’s development
- Examples of Spanish influence on English literacy
- Effective teaching practices
- Creating language-learning lessons and developing vocabulary
- What to do tomorrow

Literature review: What factors influence second-language literacy development?
- Linguistic factors
- Sociocultural factors
- Psychological factors
- Educational factors

Reference for key terms
- ELL: English language learner
- EO: English only
- ELD: English language development
- TESOL: Teachers of English to speakers of other languages
- LEP: Limited English proficient
- NES or NEP: Non-English speaking
- FES or FEP: Fluent English speaking
- WIDA: World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment
Linguistic Factors

- Phonology
- Syntax
- Morphology
- Vocabulary

Sociocultural factors

- Cultural values
- Funds of knowledge
- Language prestige
- Use of English

Psychological factors

- Cognitive factors
- Affective factors
- Personal factors

Educational factors

- Opportunities to learn
- Teaching approaches
- Structures and programs
- Teacher professional development

Research on educational factors

- Opportunity To Learn - Students receive the content and instructional strategies using sufficient instructional resources to provide them equal access to the grade level curriculum.
Research on educational factors
✓ A variety of classroom and school-wide structures, as well as effective teaching approaches.
✓ Combine interactive approaches with explicit instruction. Examples: instructional conversations, scaffolded instruction, vocabulary instruction, explicit skills instruction.

Research on educational factors
✓ Instructional procedures that build on students’ bilingual experiences, such as first language instruction, translation, cross-linguistic bridging, or the use of cognates.

Research on educational factors
✓ Student and community empowerment has a positive effect on student learning.

Research on educational factors
✓ Student and community empowerment has a positive effect on student learning.

Learning to read in English as a new language:
• In the short run, English learners can learn alphabetic and decoding skills at a similar pace to native English speakers.
• Reading comprehension skills is a harder skill to “catch up” with.
• It is highly connected to the development of academic vocabulary and language structures.
• Reading proficiency takes an extended period of time as well as instruction that facilitates student understanding.
Kevin’s 2nd grade writing sample

A current study:
- 7 students from Somali, Hmong, and Spanish-speaking backgrounds, immigrant families
- Began first grade in an urban school in the fall of 2006, presently in fifth grade
- Goal is to document their literacy learning through the elementary school years because too often the data we have are from large-scale assessments and do not give educators the full picture challenges and successes for student learning over time.

See Sing

Born 6/16/2000 in Thailand. Arrived in the United States in June of 2004. She attended Head Start and her current school beginning in kindergarten. See Sing speaks Hmong with her parents, but English with her siblings. Both parents read and write Hmong. She is one of five children. She tends to be quiet and work alone, but her participation levels and her interest and willingness to speak in English are increasing.

“See Sing writes stories and she loves writing. She writes cartoons, with bubbles and people talking. She likes to write about things she does.”
- See Sing’s mom

“See Sing likes to read a lot and after she showers every night she likes stories so she just keeps reading and reading. Her brother and sister they don’t know that much English but she has them repeat after her. She is teaching them.”
- See Sing’s mom

Spelling Development
- She spent two years using basic alphabetic strategies (Grades 1-2)
- Third grade saw the beginning use of patterns for vowels.
- Currently working on complex vowel patterns in single-syllable words (approx. late 2nd grade level)
She did go to the zoo. Molly, dad. They is the house. These the trees, the flowers, this the pool, this the bird, the sun. I want to draw my mommy. See mom on the house.

My class is read a book and I reading.

Level 4 (fluent) by end of 3rd grade
However, she scored at a grade-level equivalent of K.4 on the PPVT in the winter of 5th grade.
See Sing - Strengths
• She is proud of her Hmong culture and speaking Hmong. She learns Hmong from elders in her family. That is important to her and her family.
• She is a motivated student. She wants to do well in school and is motivated to read and write in English. Her teachers label her as a "good" student.
• She has a social group of friends at school and has a close family network that is supportive of her.

See Sing - Challenges
• She tends to be very shy and quiet in the mainstream classroom setting. She is a good student but because does not ask questions her lack of understanding of the content can go unseen at times.
• She sees herself as a "bad" student in math. She struggles with the subject and has already developed negative feelings towards her achievement ability in math class. Also, the math vocabulary is challenging for her.

How See Sing reflects the group of ELL students we have been following:
• Growth in oral English as well as basic literacy skills has been slow and at times stalls out.
• Developing vocabulary and language structures in English takes many years and comprehension is hampered because of this.
• Phonetic differences across languages make phonics, spelling, and oral reading more difficult.
• Phenomenon of “hiding out” - not sharing confusions so as not to be seen as “wrong.”
Fluency does not equal comprehension. Include language development. Have specific linguistic needs. May not monitor progress well.

Comprehension teach strategies explicitly. Make meaning together. Check for understanding. Teach key vocabulary and concepts.

How does a student’s specific home language affect his or her literacy learning?

A case study of Spanish

What phonological areas of English may be difficult for Spanish-speaking students?

Tell your partner something you know about the Spanish sound system.

Turn to a partner and share.
English consonant sounds that also exist in Spanish

Possible areas of difficulty...

- Consonant sounds not present in Spanish (e.g., v, z, h, j, sh)
- Vowel sounds not present in Spanish (e.g., short a, e, i and u)
- Consonant clusters (e.g., sl)
- Ending sounds not present in Spanish (e.g., b, nt, mp)

Vowel sounds and letter names

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Closest English letter name</th>
<th>Closest Spanish letter name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a (ate)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a (an)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e (eat)</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e (pet)</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i (ice)</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i (it)</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o (oat)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o (pot)</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u (due)</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u (up)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An example word:

shade

What did the Spanish speakers do?

- Used E to represent the long A
- Spelled out the diphthongized sound (EI, EY)
- Confused ch and sh
- Had difficulty with the ending sound
Substituting closely-related sounds from Spanish

- DA for “the”
- PET for “paint”
- BREF for “brave”
- MI for “me”
- WICH for “wish”

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**Look to find the logic behind your ELL students’ developmental spellings**

The more you know about their home languages, the more connections you will find.

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**Other examples from Spanish speakers**

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**Effective Teaching Practices for ELLs**

- Combine interactive approaches with explicit instruction such as instructional conversations, sheltered instruction, vocabulary instruction, explicit skills instruction.
- Build on students’ bilingual experiences
- Involve families and communities
- Build on culturally familiar structures
Instruction for English learners is most effective when:

- It is explicit and systematic
- It allows students to interact with others in their community
- It helps students make connections to what they already know
- Students actively construct knowledge

Explicit and systematic instruction

The teacher clarifies, models, and organizes material for maximum student understanding.

Assess students’ development and use appropriate level instruction.

Follow a systematic sequence of phonics instruction

Clarify second language confusions

Early Letter Name - Alphabetic
Use visuals such as sound boards and alphabets

Engaging in a learning community

There are opportunities for social interaction. All students are connected and held to high expectations.

Highlighting connections

Help students see relationships, and build on what they know.

THE EMPTY POT

De Colores
and Other Latino-American Folk Songs
for Children
Help students identify cognates

bank
banco
banque

Active construction of knowledge

Involve students with hands-on activities, purposeful tasks, and using their bodies and voices.

For example...

- Personal Readers
- Word Study Notebooks
- Concept sorts
- “Work” the vocabulary
- Have many visual supports available

Personal Readers

Word Study Notebooks
Embed concept sorts into your classroom activities

“Work” the vocabulary...

Two teachers who had great success with English learners’ reading comprehension

Helen: “Data freak”
* Using data to group students intentionally. Students were grouped less by categories such as ELL, and more by their reading level. Groupings facilitated the use of accommodations and adaptations.
* Focusing on vocabulary instruction
* Building background knowledge

Lily: “Show me how smart you are”
* Collaborates with an ELL support teacher
* Thematic teaching
* Use of higher-level questions
* Organized and sequential
* High level of student engagement.

Motivating or engaging students

Trains students to understand classroom expectations: “…that they were supposed to be responsible learners, and when they were sitting in front of me I didn’t want rocks, I wanted learners. We talked about what a rock does. I asked them what does a rock do— it takes up space. Does it think? No it doesn’t. Mrs. H doesn’t want rocks, she wants responsible learners who take risks, and I get very proud of you when you take risks. And that’s how we talked.” (T)
Motivating or engaging students
Urged and prodded students to work to their fullest potential. “They want it to be right in front of their face, and I tell them, It’s not there. It’s not going to pop up at you all the time. You are going to have to dig for it, and that’s very hard for them.” (T)

Motivating or engaging students
Expects all students to share in class. “When you are in here- I know you’re shy, I used to be shy, too. But, in order for you to be ready for fourth grade you need to share your ideas and show me how smart you are. And that means you are going to have to share your ideas. Those are the expectations, and nothing more.” (T)

Video clip of effective instruction

Video viewing
• What did you notice about this teachers instruction that supported English learners?
• What effective strategies were in place?
• How does this scenario apply to your teaching settings?

Language-learning classrooms
• Students need regularly scheduled, explicit language development lessons
• Oral language also needs to be taught within each instructional activity.
• Teach vocabulary as you learn letters, sounds, and words.
• Scaffold speaking and writing tasks.
Include oral language instruction and practice throughout the day.

For example, turn and share

Ways to get students talking
- Partner shares
- Read/chant along
- Small group discussions
- Games
- Individual conferencing
- Check for understanding
- Reflect on sorting

Repeated Reading with Rhymes and Patterns
- Low anxiety environment
- Connects oral to written language
- Rhythmic
- Provides time for students to talk
- Provides a model of language structures in English

Using memorized poems to practice Concept of Word

Watch
  how high I'm jumping.
Watch
  how far I hop.
Watch
  how long I'm skipping.
Watch
  how fast I stop!

Myra Cohn Livingston

Have many visual supports available
Select words to focus on in word study that are useful in students’ academic and personal lives, and are critical for understanding important content.

Ideas for Write With:
- Modeled writing
- Encourage developmental writing, and provide individualized feedback
- Language experience dictations
- Group experience stories

Write with pattern sentences:

I wish I ____.

Red is for ____.

I like ___, but I don’t like ____.

A ___ is fast, but a ___ is slow.

What are the best ways to support students’ academic vocabulary development and comprehension of reading materials?

To provide effective vocabulary instruction:
1. Build on what students already know (e.g., home language, cognates, background knowledge)
2. Tailor instruction to gaps in students’ language
3. Teach vocabulary in meaningful contexts
4. Go in depth
5. Set challenging but not overwhelming expectations
6. Select high-utility, conceptually important words for study
7. Organize word learning in themes
Sample Spanish-English cognates
- radio/radio
- baby/bebé
- mom/mamá
- technology/tecnología
- Greek/greco

Experiences that would be new for your ELL students
Experiences that would build on the background knowledge of your ELL students

Selecting and reinforcing important words

*Beginning English learners* need essential survival vocabulary—basic communication phrases and labels for common objects and school-related terms.

Selecting and reinforcing important words

Students who have a basic vocabulary need to learn words that are highly frequent in texts but less common in oral language. Choose words that:
- Are important to understanding the central theme being studied
- Are used over and over again in reading materials
- Foster conceptual learning
- Are part of students’ instructional reading programs

When selecting books consider:
- The age and language level of your students
- Interesting content worthy of class time
- Topics that lead to conversation
- Visually stimulating

Next steps
- Assess your students and form developmentally-appropriate groupings in reading and writing.
- Make the essential literacy activities a part of the daily schedule.
- Focus on highly useful vocabulary and practice important sentence structures.
- Notice the difficulties students have with learning standard English words and sounds, and share these insights with others.
Next steps

- Build collaborative structures among language teachers, specialist teachers, and classroom teachers.
- Set up a professional learning community or study group to read a professional article, view videotapes of classroom practice, or analyze student work together.
- Find a team to work with as you implement tailored instruction for English learners and collect data on their learning.

Putting it all together for English learners:

Classrooms in which students are actively engaged.

Teachers are explicit and systematic.

Students use language and literacy in purposeful ways.

New learning connects to what students already know.

Students are our guides to better understanding second-language literacy learning. Our colleagues work with us to put effective instruction into practice!

“"We pride ourselves on that promise [of a better life], and to fulfill it, we must offer adequate—often excellent—education to all children, not just monolingual, native English-speaking children of native English-speaking parents.”

Shatz & Wilkinson, 2010

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