

**RESEARCH on LEARNING TO READ in a
SECOND LANGUAGE
&
IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING
and INTERVENTION**

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ROAD MAP

- A. findings of NLP & CREDE panels (and others):
 - o similarities in English-L1 and English-L2 reading development
 - o differences and accommodations
 - o instructional implications

- B. ELLs with reading difficulties/impairment
 - o learning difficulties vs learning disabilities
 - o Is dual language learning a risk factor?
 - o Identifying ELLs with reading difficulties or impairment
 - o intervention strategies

(A)

RESEARCH on L2 READING DEVELOPMENT

THE NATIONAL LITERACY PANEL

- *Developing Literacy in Second Language Learners (2006):*
August & Shanahan (Lawrence Erlbaum/CAL)

CREDE/CAL SYNTHESIS PROJECT

- *Educating English Language Learners (2006):*
Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders & Christian
(Cambridge University Press)

RESEARCH SAYS THAT:

- 1) L2 and L1 reading development are the **same** in some fundamental ways
- 2) English-L2 reading development is **different**
- 3) English-L2 literacy development benefits from L1 literacy instruction
- 4) instruction matters

SIMILARITIES in ENGLISH-L2 and ENGLISH-L1 LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

- a) complex – L1 & L2 literacy acquisition include multiple components
- b) hierarchical – small-unit skills and big-unit skills
- c) cumulative -- early development influences later competence

INSTRUCTION

(Goldenberg, 2008)

- good literacy instruction in English-L1 can guide English-L2 literacy instruction:
 - ★ clear & developmentally-appropriate goals
 - ★ meaningful, challenging, and motivating contexts
 - ★ engagement through: cooperative learning; instructional conversations; & other interactive teaching
 - ★ direct instruction of component skills, as needed
 - ★ extended opportunities to practice
 - ★ feedback and modeling
 - ★ individualization **
 - ★ use assessment to guide instructional planning

INSTRUCTIONAL ACCOMMODATIONS

- ★ dedicated ELD block (+ integrated ELD instruction)
- ★ contextualization: use texts/activities that are familiar
- ★ materials at appropriate level of language difficulty
- ★ use of and links to L1 – more later
- ★ predictable/consistent routines
- ★ conceptual support: graphic organizers, preview-review
- ★ additional time, practice and interaction
- ★ redundancy
- ★ preview new words, concepts, structures
- ★ speaking and delivery style: slowed, simplified...
- ★ assess language and content separately

BALANCED LITERACY INSTRUCTION

(Escamilla, 2000)

- ❑ critical to integrate instruction of small unit skills with big units and with academic language development:
 - focus on small units alone is boring
 - time is at a premium
 - show how small units are functional
 - to prepare ELLs for “*reading to learn*”

ALPHABETIC KNOWLEDGE
LETTER-SOUND KNOW.
PHONOLOGICAL AWARE.
VOCABULARY



VOCABULARY
ACADEMIC LANGUAGE:
complex language
TEXT GENRES

L2 LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IS DIFFERENT

- ★ ELLs draw on L1-based abilities, strategies, and knowledge
- ★ L1 is particularly important in early stages of L2 literacy development
- ★ role of L1 changes with age/reading development
- ★ influences from L2 become more important with develop
- ★ but L1 effects will persist – as needed

L1 INFLUENCES: good or bad?

POSITIVE TRANSFER:

- o many L1-based influences \Rightarrow appropriate or correct English forms; e.g., cognate vocabulary
- o these effects are invisible because the L2 forms are right

NEGATIVE TRANSFER:

- o some L1-influences \Rightarrow errors in English; e.g., use of L1 phonology for L2 spelling and decoding
- o these effects are visible \rightarrow transfer is bad!

TRANSFER IS GOOD !

“linguistic bootstrapping”

→ ELLs have a unique **BILINGUAL RESERVOIR** of skills, knowledge, & experiences: L1 + ENGLISH



→ good ELL readers see L1-L2 connections and use them; poor readers do not see connections (Jimenez, Garcia & Pearson, 1996)

THE ROLE of L1 in EARLY STAGES

L1

letter sounds

phonol. awareness

vocabulary

decoding skills

print awareness



ENGLISH

letter sounds

phonol. awareness

vocabulary

decoding skills

print awareness

L1 Literacy Instruction Benefits English-L2 Outcomes

Lindholm-Leary & Borsato (2006) -- bilingually-instructed ELLs:

- ❑ scored the same or higher on reading tests in English than English-monolingual comparison groups in all schools
- ❑ performed at grade level on state-mandated reading tests in English by grade 5
- ❑ achieved parity with comparison groups (or norms) after 4 or 5 years in DL programs

“there is strong convergent evidence that the educational success of ELLs is positively related to sustained instruction through the students’ first language”

IMPLICATIONS: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF L1 SKILLS

- ⇒ devise activities and strategies that encourage ELLs to make use of L1 skills even if instruction is in English
- ⇒ ELLs can benefit from being shown similarities and differences between L1 and English
- ⇒ studying L1-L2 connections enhances metalinguistic awareness ⇒ enhances reading skills
- ⇒ do not penalize ELLs during assessment for using L1 strategies
- ⇒ encourage ELLs and their parents to value L1 so that L1 is sufficiently developed to support English-L2

HOME LANGUAGE EXPERIENCES MATTER

- ❑ home language activities (in L1 or L2) can enhance acquisition of literacy in English in school
- ❑ use of **L1 in ways that are linked to literacy** facilitates literacy development in English in school: language for analytic, critical thinking; expanded vocabulary
- ❑ use of L1 at home otherwise is not necessarily advantageous
- ❑ parents may need guidance and materials



(B)
ELLs WITH LEARNING
DIFFICULTIES/DISABILITIES



ELLs with learning disabilities?

ELLs with learning difficulties?

learning difficulty

- ❑ some children under-perform because they have difficulty learning because of the learning environment or their learning style or rate
- ❑ learning difficulties require and respond well to additional support using the resources of the typical classroom
- ❑ providing early and effective support can reduce the number of students who later experience entrenched problems
- ❑ support appropriate for children who have learning difficulties is often appropriate for children with disabilities, but the latter need more intensive and sustained support

learning disability

- ❑ a neurobiological (or innate) impairment in the underlying brain processes that are responsible for learning (Official Definition of Learning Disabilities of the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, 2002)

- ❑ LDs are associated with deficits in specific aspects of brain functioning and, thus, are associated with specific learning impairments:
 - language
 - reading
 - written language
 - math

- ❑ qualify for specialized services

IS DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNING A RISK FACTOR?

A PARENT:

“... the resource centre specialist indicated that my daughter will end up being illiterate in both languages in grade 5 because of my refusal to do what is best for her now. She also stressed that all the research supports putting a child with difficulties such as my daughter’s in an unilingual environment.”

April 2002

Dual language learning is not a risk factor

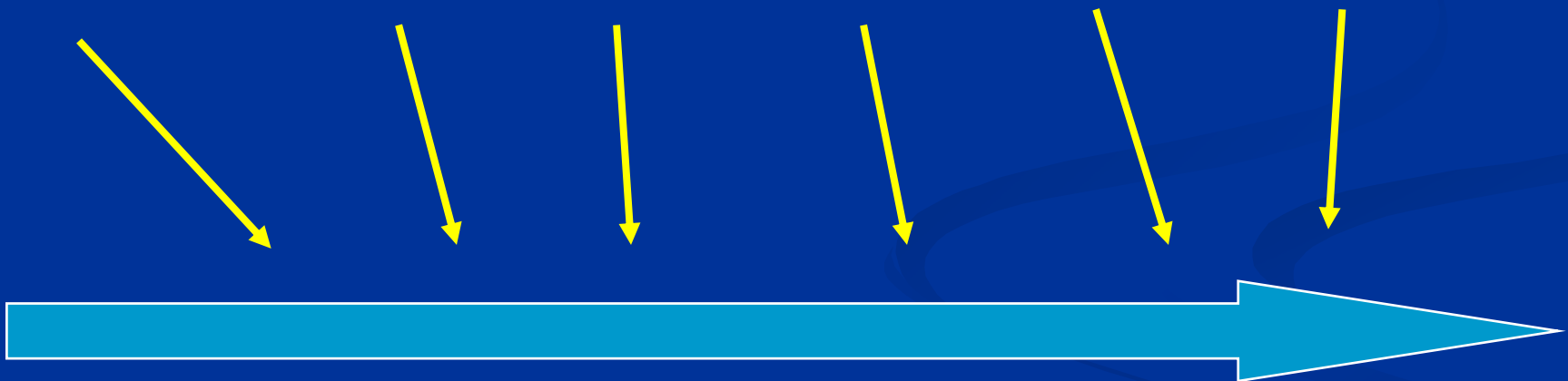
Successive or simultaneous dual language learning does not put children at enhanced risk for learning disabilities

Evidence:

- a) developmental milestones in simultaneous bilinguals**
- b) dual language education**
- c) the case of bilingual children with language impairment**

a) language learning milestones

word segmentation (7 mths)	babbling (7-9 mths)	first words (12mths)	vocabulary spurt (18mths)	word comb. (24mths)	grammar/ communicat'n (beyond)
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**milestones are the same for simultaneous
bilinguals**

IMPLICATIONS

- ❑ should not assume that the linguistic differences that bilingual children exhibit are atypical or signs of impairment that need clinical attention
- ❑ most differences are signs of typical development for children learning two languages
- ❑ many differences will reflect the nature and amount of L1 and L2 input
- ❑ should not use test norms based on monolinguals to assess the language status of dual language learners because they fail to take into account facts about dual language exposure and development

b) dual language education*

Spanish-English students in DL programs:

- a) score at or higher than state standards
- b) are more likely to close the achievement gap with English-L1 students
- c) have higher grades, lower transiency rates, and are more likely to be on track with high school credits than English learners with low levels of L1 proficiency
- d) have higher levels of achievement in English reading and math than English learners



* Lindholm-Leary & Borsato (2006)

IMPLICATIONS

- ❑ prevalence rates of learning disability should be the same among ELLs (in English-only or bilingual programs)
- ❑ ELLs who are at-risk do not have to be excluded from dual language programs on the assumption that they will do better in an English-only program
- ❑ ELLs who exhibit signs of language learning disability do not have to be restricted to learning one language

c) the case of bilingual children with language impairment

WHAT IS SPECIFIC LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT?

- o persistent oral/spoken language impairment
 - ★ receptive and expressive language
- o affects 6-10% of school-aged children
- o not related to or caused by other disorders/conditions
- o growing evidence of a hereditary component

FRENCH-ENGLISH BILINGUALS WITH LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT (LI)

(Paradis, Crago, Genesee & Rice, 2003)

French-English bilinguals with LI

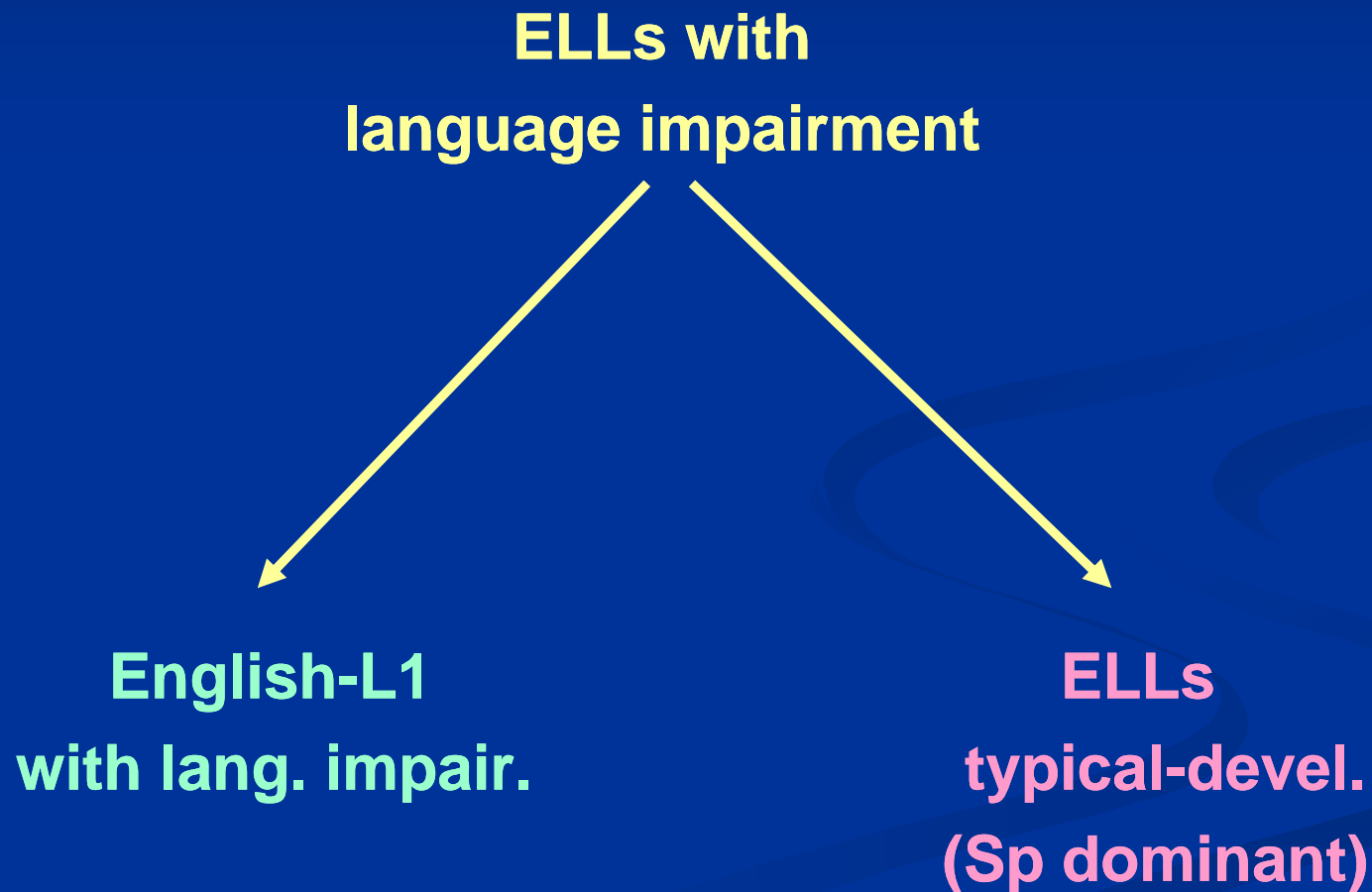
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graph TD; A[French-English bilinguals with LI] --> B[Fr monos with LI*]; A --> C[Eng monos with LI**]
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Fr monos with LI*

Eng monos with LI**

SPANISH-ENGLISH CHILDREN WITH LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT

(Gutierrez-Clellen & Wagner, 2006)



RESULTS

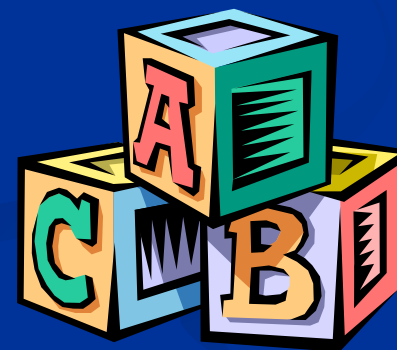
- bilingual children with impairment had **same patterns** of impairment as monolingual children with impairment
- bilingual children with impairment had **same severity** of impairment as monolingual children with impairment
- bilingual children were bilingual!

IMPLICATIONS

- minority language or bilingual status does not put ELLs at risk for reading impairment
- should be same proportion of ELLs & English-L1 students with reading impairments (6-10%)
- ELLs are at greater risk for reading **difficulties**

IDENTIFYING L2 READING DIFFICULTIES: early stages

- ELLs with word reading difficulties/disabilities have same profile as English-L1 students with difficulties:
 - ✗ poor phonological awareness skills
 - ✗ poor letter-sound knowledge
 - ✗ limited vocabulary



→ ELLs are less prone to difficulty at this stage than later

IDENTIFYING L2 READING DIFFICULTIES: later stages

- ELLs have greater difficulty with comprehension than decoding
- much less research on reading comprehension/difficulties
- difficulties are more complex & may be due to:
 - ✘ **small-unit skills**: letter-sound knowledge; phonological awareness, vocabulary
 - ✘ **oral language skills**: academic vocabulary and oral language
 - ✘ **strategic competencies**:
 - comprehension monitoring
 - inference-making
 - text genres

assessment issues

- significant positive correlations between L1 and L2 reading-related skills:
 - use same kinds of diagnostic tasks as for English- L1 students; use L1 or L2 assessments
 - norms for English language tests are inappropriate
 - compare ELLs to other ELLs of same age & stage
 - use L1 tests if student knows no or little English – early assessment, before they acquire English
 - RTI can help disentangle L2 learning issues from impairment issues

SUPPORT

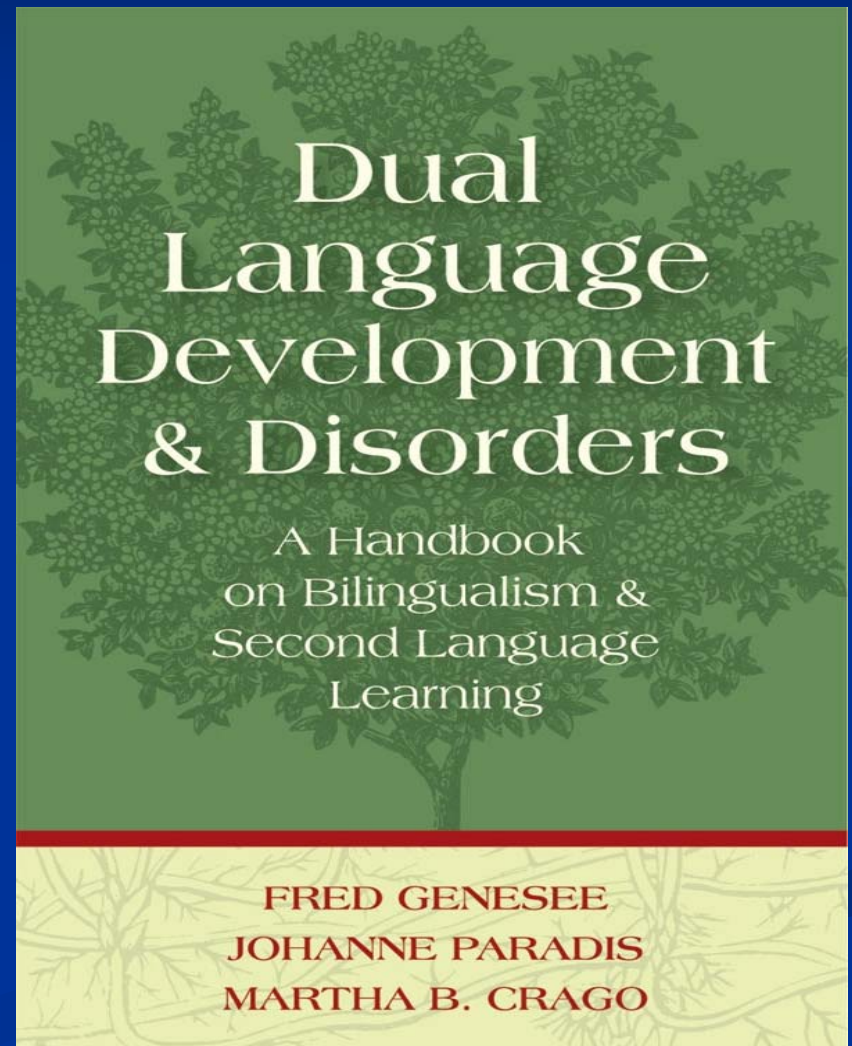
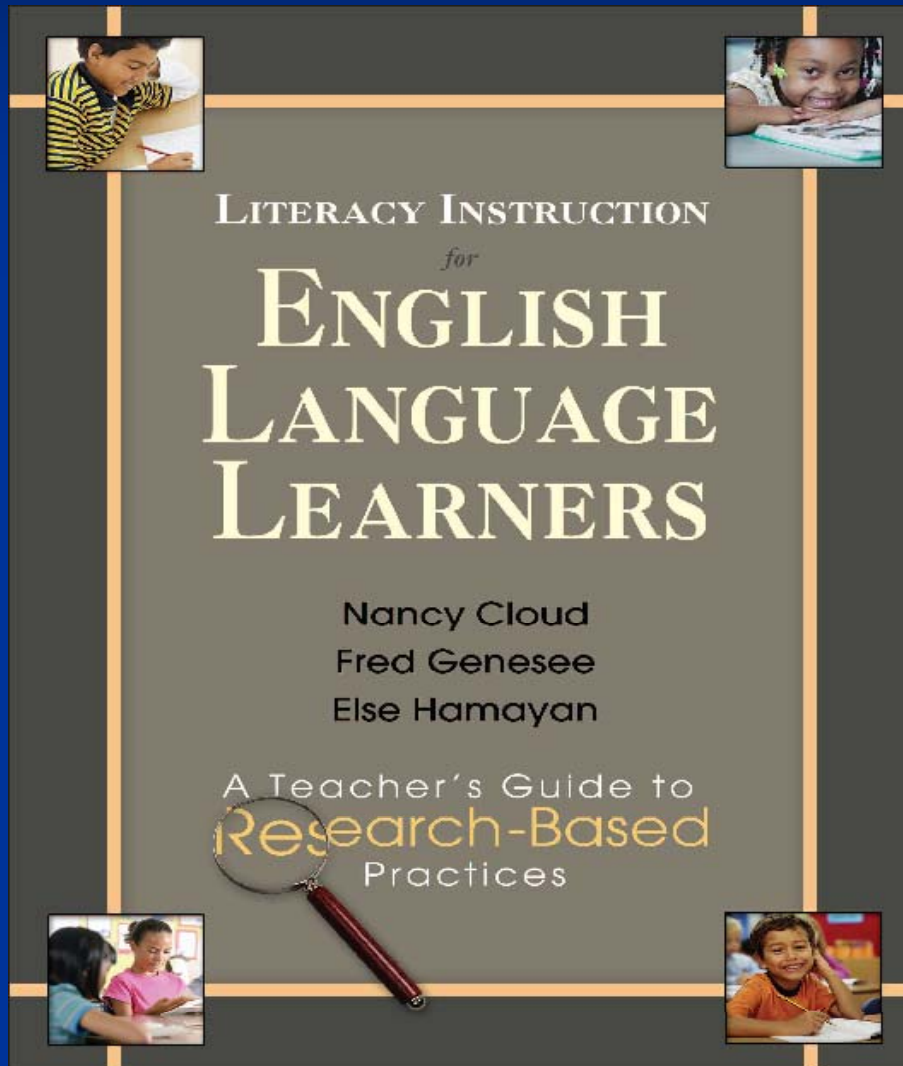
- o can be in L1 or in English
- o **focused** on specific difficulties: vocabulary, oral reading fluency, comprehension strategies
- o **direct instruction** of troublesome component – foundational skills, teach comprehension strategies
- o **individualized** to respond to individual student's needs
- o **early** to avoid difficulties from becoming impairments
- o **sustained**: use RTI to monitor progress

last words...

- ❑ dual language learning does not put ELLs at risk for reading (or other learning) disabilities
- ❑ support for students with difficulties or impairment is fundamentally the same
- ❑ support must be individualized to take ELL-specific needs into account
- ❑ early classroom support will minimize most difficulties and reduce rates of impairment

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Thank you