Red Bank Primary and Middle Schools: A conversation about teaching ELLs or bilingual children

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Let’s ask Qs

• What’s important to you?
• Where do you want your school to be in terms of its designation?
• How successful do you feel in reaching all your students, NNS of English, in particular?
• In essence, what ‘bothers’ you?
At the end of the day

You will be able to:

• Provide a more meaningful instruction to ELLs
• Respond to bilingualism and ELLs’ needs with regard to what you teach
• Engage language in a meaningful way when you teach
• Initiate a plan that engages parental assistance
• Identify ideas in which home-school language practices can be more fluid
ELLs vs. Bilinguals

- Cognition and Bilingualism
- Literacy and Bilingualism
- Home and Speech Community Practices
- Language Rights
- Creating a school that endorses bilingualism
SLA, Bilingualism, Cognitive load, and Language processing
ONE
Is it universally understood the same way when it is uttered by a teacher?
English Prepositions

• In
• On
• At
English Prepositions

- In
- On
- At
Balanced Theory: One language grows, other gets weaker (L1)
Balloon Theory: One balloon for each
Two languages co-existing in the brain.
Semantic: Meaning

- Homonyms: to, two, too
- Synonyms: hard, difficult
- Antonyms: up, down
My bilingual parser

• Which one do I choose?
• Where is the context that guides my parser?
• Where do I look for meaning?
Iceberg Analogy

- Cummins (1980)
Threshold Theory: Relationship between Cognition and Degree of Bilingualism
• But bilingualism is not that clear cut. In families you can have siblings who manifest two different levels of proficiency in English.
• Many factors condition the use and experiences with one or both languages.
The Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis

• Suggests that a child’s second language competence is partly dependent on the level of competence already achieved in the first language. The more developed the first language is, the more likely that the second will develop with more ease.

• Hakuta et al. (2000) found that it took four to seven years for English proficiency to kick in or develop in a learner.

• Programs that transition children with four years or less--are not allowing sufficient time for students to acquire the level of proficiency needed to deal with disciplines that have high academic English contents (or the target language content) or dense material.
The BICS and CALP Distinction

• While Cummins (2008) has suggested the Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive/Academic language proficiency (CALP).

• Today: high-density type of curriculum content, content that requires a student to analyze, synthesize, evaluate where higher order thinking skills are required of a monolingual and bilingual.

• ‘context reduced’ language in which a text contains language which is not contextualized and made meaningful-- the language appears dis-embedded and lacking support that will enable a learner to interpret meaning.
My parser again!

- The flow of a spoken word in the brain, how does it work?
- What are slips of the tongue and why are they produced?
- What does frequency, recency, and context have to do with language processing?

*Flying planes can be dangerous.*
1) ‘Cognitive’ refers to instruction that should be mentally challenging using higher order thinking skills such as identifying main idea, inferencing, evaluating, summarizing, etc.

2) ‘Academic’ now needs to consider how curriculum content becomes integrated with language instruction so that students are able to learn language and content simultaneously.

3) Comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985)

Language is an academic discipline but learning language in another academic discipline such as science: Our bilingual children do both simultaneously while monolinguals do not. -- Increases cognitive load.
Bilingual learners are doing double duty

We need to lessen the cognitive load so that their processor can move forward.
CONVERSATION TIME
“Literacy is language and language is literacy”. Hudelson (1994:102)
Reading, writing, listening, speaking, or signing

• Are interrelated in all languages and they support each other.

• In teaching bilingual children, we may find that the student's home language may not have a written standard. --but not a deficit concern/model. Find out.

• A student may not come from a society or community that uses written materials--rural areas, indigenous populations, oral cultures.

• Our teaching must take into account the concept of biliterate practices-- If we attend to only English, a bilingual student may become mono-literate and will experience more difficulties in learning.

Gracias
Functional Literacy

• Schools focus on functional literacy--mastery of skills needed to read and write as measured by standardized tests and state, national, or local district measures.

• Our NES have learned to read via the phonetic approach, one phoneme at a time. Our Spanish speakers may have learned to read by the syllabic approach /ma/, /me/, etc.

• Literacy, to make sense to a bilingual child, has address both Spanish and English to enable them to make appropriate connections.
A Sociocultural Approach

Brian Street’s work -- an important contribution to the world of literacy.

Literacy practices are influenced by social, cultural, political, and economic factors, and that literacy is not a separate or autonomous skill.

• **Literacy practices are culturally determined for specific purposes. Thus, biliteracy practices, in the case of Red Bank children, is very important.**

• **When we teach bilingual students, we are dealing with the information a bilingual individual needs in two languages, not one.**
Not only a Latino/Hispanic Issue


• Emphasizes the diversity of, and interplay between linguistic codes and literacy practice in multilingual classrooms.

• Gregory & Williams (2000) show how Gujarati children living in England mix and blend practices from home and school to make meaning. That is, they mix family literacy practices at home with those in school.
Nancy Hornberger’s work on biliteracy in 2003 suggests that biliteracy depends on the degree to which groups are:

1) Bilingual and have power in a society;
2) Live in monolingual as opposed to bilingual societies;
3) Are represented by several languages in the society whether literate or not, or have similar/dissimilar linguistic structures or scripts;
4) Associated with schools in which their languages are taught
5) Are given or have opportunities to receive or produce texts with different varieties of diverse languages

Advantages in Red Bank: One L1, unclear about L1 dialects and literacy practices at home.
Models of Biliteracy

1. A convergent monoliterate model: two Ls used for oral communication, but one is dominant for instruction;

2. A convergent biliterate model: employs both in communication to transact with text written, but with the minority language literacy informs the target L instruction;

3. A separation biliterate model: uses one language or the other to transact with a text written according to a sociocultural and discursive norm;

4. A flexible multiple model: uses the two languages in communicating to transact with the texts written; capable of weaving and integrating and separating both languages.
Schools have to make decisions: literacy practices

Sequencing Model
• Successful readers in a first language must reach a threshold of second language competence for transferibility of literacy skills to occur. Literacy in the first language goes first before starting literacy instruction in the second language (the target language).

Bidirectional Model
• Studies posit that the bidirectionality of biliteracy development is dynamic and flexible.

• Even in other countries and schools where scripts are very different, studies have shown that children are able to translanguaging between their mother tongue and the target language. See other studies such as: Hakuta, 1986; Wong-Fillmore & Valadez, 1986; and Dworin, 2003, among others).
TRANSLANGUAGING
Instructional Approaches

Using two languages---Freestyle approach

1) Authentic situated practices and immersing students in such a practice;
2) Overt instruction to develop awareness and understanding of practice;
3) Critique of practices to enable meanings to link to social contexts and purposes;
Writing

• Acknowledge Spanish: Break a code of written text by recognizing the fundamental features L1 --Lucky Red Bank!

• Participate in understanding and composing meaningful written utterances, visuals, spoken and signed texts and take into account the learners' cultural discourses, texts, and meaning systems in Spanish.

• Know the social functions of texts at home and school.

• Critically analyze and transform texts from L1 to L2.
Expectations for Teachers: Validate L1

Gregory (1996) suggests that teachers must be able to:

- Activate three types of schemata--linguistic, content, text.
- Provide explicit instruction, previewing, skimming, adjusting reading rate, recognizing author’s purposes, higher order skills beyond decoding such as analyzing inferences vs. literal meaning, separating fact from opinion, etc. **AS A ROUTINE until they ‘get it’** (in L1 and then L2).
- Teach vocabulary and other structural characteristics of the language and the text **EXPLICITLY**.
- Encourage students to **read in both Ls extensively to become productive readers**.

Read to your students in L2 **[bring a parent or guest or student]** and L1, show visuals, and teach vocabulary by pointing, showing, illustrating, and having them use multiple senses to capture meaning.
Conversation Time
Learning does not take place just ‘between the ears,’ but is eminently a social process. Students’ learning is bound within larger contextual, historical, political, and ideological frameworks that affect students’ lives.

González, Moll, and Amanti (2005.ix)
Funds of Knowledge and Speech Communities

- González, Moll, & Amanti (2005), suggest one underlying premise: people are competent, they have knowledge, and their life experiences all contribute to the knowledge they bring to the classroom.

Family Language Practices

- “No learner is a blank slate.”

- If we acknowledge the home practices, we are able to detect how they learn in that context, the cultural models that exist, and the language preferences that they have, among other concerns. So, we have HOME-WORK!

Speech Community Language Practices

- At the macro level: Newspapers, TV, media, shops, stores, ...
What we do influences outcomes

When we legitimize the household and literacy practices of our students, we affirm the funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992), a fund that each student possesses.
When teachers legitimize the household and literacy practices of their students, they affirm the funds of knowledge (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992), a fund that each student possesses. I extend this also to legitimizing the community in which the students live. When we come to realization that as instructors we need to take into account home and community practices, we are then increasing the chances of our students drawing meaningful connections in classroom learning.
Examining outcomes of ELLs on high-stake tests

Standardized tests do not take into account:

• How bilinguals are progressing in one L, how fast or slow. (Formative Assessments can take care of that).

• There are non-cognitive outcomes that our bilinguals may be undergoing upon arriving to this country (e.g., their attitude, self-esteem, emotional state, adjustments to a new country, adjustments to a new teaching/instructional model).

• Therefore, while tests conventionally weigh the outcomes of a program such as measures of basic skills (e.g., literacy, math, science, reading, computer skills), many other aspects are not measured.
Some Qs

NJ has policy for accommodations. See Colorín...

• Within the context of efficacy, another consideration is retention—what are we doing long term re: retention?
• What role does parental involvement have within the context of a community?
• What are the language practices in your students community that influence test outcomes?
• What languages do we hear when our students work together, in the library, hallways, etc.? Listen to parents?
U.S. National Research Council advocates the following:

1. All children in the United States should be educated to become bilingual.

2. The expectations and opportunities afforded to bilingual students must be equal to those of native English speakers.

3. In an increasing global economy, proficiency in English is critical; proficiency in another language is critical as well.
LANGUAGE AS A PROBLEM, RIGHT, AND RESOURCE
Language as a Problem

• Social Disadvantages Arguments

• Disunity Arguments
Critics concern with civil order and social disharmony should also concern themselves with issues of poverty, unemployment, and racial discrimination... In pledges of allegiance, it is liberty and justice for all—not English—for all, that is to keep us indivisible.” Otheguy (1982:314)

• Bilingualism does not create problems: It creates biliteracy.
Language as a Right

• Language as basic human right. Just as we have the right to choose a religion, we have the right to choose our language.

• Many language minorities have suffered considerable discrimination such as the Native Americans in the United States or the Māori people of New Zealand.
Personal language rights may be derived from personal, human, legal, and constitutional rights (May, 2001) and these rights are based on individual rights such as the right to freedom of expression. However, language rights, we can argue, have to do with the rights of a group also. Recall that languages are not spoken by just one individual but in interactions with multiple individuals of one society through networks, families, friends, work places, etc. (Singapore!)
• The rights of an individual are a major part of the democratic system.
• The English-only laws that are emerging in several states tend to be restrictive and do not consider education.

• There has been a proliferation of practices that do not allow other languages to be used in the workplace, schools, in public offices, etc.
Can you think of how you would be better off knowing two Ls

• Name a few things you could do or would like to do:
Language as a Resource

• Bilingualism can provide an intellectual, cultural, economic, social, communicative, and citizenship resource, an asset.

• English as an international language has been added to school curricula in Europe; we are not doing the same here with world languages.
Undervaluing Language as a Resource

Can we ask the question regarding why the U.S. does not preserve languages other than English?
"As bilingual students' first intense encounter with the English language and with American culture and society, schools must overcome social attitudes opposed to the social and academic development of bilingual learners". Brisk (2006:96)
Approaches to Increase Status

- All teachers are teachers of language. Teams or LCs.
- Teachers and administrators have to collaborate with parents as resources.
- ESL teachers and teachers of other disciplines need to collaborate.
- School leaders need to allow use of L1 by teachers, students, etc. validate the L1 of the school.

The school's goals are its leader's goals and they should be the teachers' goals and the bilingual parents' goals too.
Recommendation #1

• All schools should have a nurturing environment and a family atmosphere with high expectations for gaining knowledge and providing personal development and growth.

• How can this be done with regard to language development?
Recommendation #2

• Improvement of instructional programs for ELLs necessitates fundamental changes within the whole school because the overall quality of the school’s literacy model will affect outcomes in tests and designation.

• *Jot down a line for a mission statement with regard to your bilingual students.*
Recommendation #3

- Set clear goals, create an appropriate school climate by creating a bilingual community: knowing the bilingual students, setting high expectations, integrating their first language in the curriculum, integrate the community, etc.

- *Can you name a few more?*
Recommendation #4

• School goals. What should they be like?
• We want our bilingual students to obtain and reach language proficiency to an academic level, a grade level commensurate with native English speakers of the school.
• We want our school to have sociocultural integration to their ethnic community and society at large.
• We want all our students to reach academic achievement as defined by school for all students.

• *In which ways can you determine that these goals can be achieved?*
Recommendation #5

We need to foster a good school climate where Spanish is respected and used and legitimized:

• Foster positive attitudes towards use of Spanish at home and other native languages
• Encourage positive attitudes toward English and English speakers and non-English speakers and learners of English or Bilingual students.
• Foster a nurturing and positive attitude towards those who speak another dialect of English.
• Nurture positive attitudes toward the cultural background of ELLs students.
• Face linguistic and cultural conflict.

*Reflect on more practices that can assist in fostering a good school climate for ELLs*---
Recommendation #6

- Nieto (2004) maintains the following regarding the attitudes towards culture that we bring to schools. We need to:
  - Identify levels of attitudes toward culture--
    - Tolerance
    - Acceptance
    - Respect
    - Affirmation
    - Solidarity Critique
  - *Explain why these are important.*
Recommendation #7

• We need effective ways to get to know our bilingual students.

• *Provide creative ways in which we can get to know bilingual students who speak languages you do not know.*
Recommendation #8

We need to have high expectations.

• We should provide challenging curricula, use teaching strategies that reach everyone, foster critical thinking, group students heterogeneously, use the native language of the bilingual student whenever possible, engage students in wanting to learn English not at the expense of the first language.

• Please provide one more expectation.
Recommendation #9

• Communities of Practice: At the micro level (sharing w/ other teachers) and macro level (curricular-school). A CoP, according to Eckert & McConnell-Ginet (1992), is “an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in an endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations – in short, practices – emerge in the course of this mutual endeavour” (p. 464).

• How can you start at least one at the micro level?
Recommendation #10

• Establish relationships with communities and home: deepen the connection, create support for volunteering to support teaching, engage even siblings, neighbors, Hispanic leaders.

• *Think of ways in which you can create and strengthen home-school partnerships with regard to language learning.*
• Understand your sociolinguistic profile and language practices.
• Know the language profiles and practices of your students, school community, families, and community surrounding the school.
• Know the societal language management policy.
• Know your school’s language education policy.
• Understand your beliefs, attitudes, ideologies, and motivations: Self reflect.
• Understand the beliefs, attitudes, ideologies, and motivations of others (colleagues and leaders).
• Know the staffing, organization, and leadership structure and practices in your school.
• Understand how the curriculum and pedagogy are interrelated with language ed policies, and find ways you can act as a policy maker.
• Remain critical and aware of language ed policies: testing and outcomes are too close to you.
• Understand ways that assessments affect you and your bilingual children.
http://www.colorincolorado.org/web_resources/by_state/new_jersey/