Child Assessments and Dual Language Learners in Early Childhood: Opportunities & Challenges

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(Amy Davis / Baltimore Sun)

One in three children under the age of five in the US has at least one parent who speaks a language other than English at home.

These children bring **linguistic and cultural assets** to the early childhood programs they attend.

Slides: MDRC & Measures for Early Success

We need to allow all children to demonstrate their knowledge in ways that are reflective of their unique lived experiences.

Assessments are NOT culturally and linguistically “neutral” -- they are reflective of the knowledge and experiences of the communities that inform their development.

Slides: MDRC & Measures for Early Success

For example, math assessments often ask children to match like-shapes or sort similar items into groups.

- Even if I know English and Spanish, I may find it easier to recognize words like “match,” “same,” and “pair” **in my home language** if my family uses these words in Spanish at home (perhaps when we are sorting laundry together).
- If so, I may benefit from hearing the instructions in both English and Spanish.

Challenge 1:

Driving improvements in assessment and measurement through research, application, and utility with the growing dual language learner population

Challenge 2:

Incorporating cultural, developmental and longitudinal considerations in measurement development, in general and with dual language learner communities

Challenge 3:

Engaging in actions for improved research, practice, training, and policy with dual language learner communities

Back to Challenge 1:

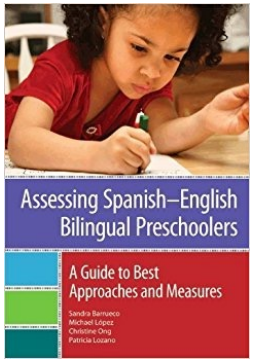
Driving improvements in assessment and measurement through research, application, and utility with the growing dual language learner population

Errors in Assessment and Measurement

- Conducting rudimentary **translations**
- Utilizing a measure in another language out of **convenience**, familiarity, or because it is adequate in English
- **Assumption** of lack of bilingual measurement approaches

(Barrueco et al., 2023; López & Barrueco, 2008)

- **Approaches and Measures**
  - Language Screening & Routing
  - Assessments (Symmetrical vs. Asymmetrical)
  - Psychometric, Cultural, and Linguistic Properties for both English and Spanish versions



- Over **1 in 3 measures** in Spanish had <u>not</u> been adequately developed

- Including **extensively used measures** in research, practice, and policy

Funder: Pew Charitable Trusts

Challenge 2:

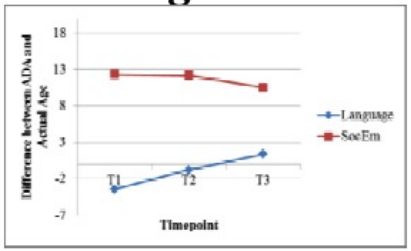
Incorporating cultural, developmental and longitudinal considerations in measurement development, in general and with dual language learner communities

Family Literacy Multistate Intervention

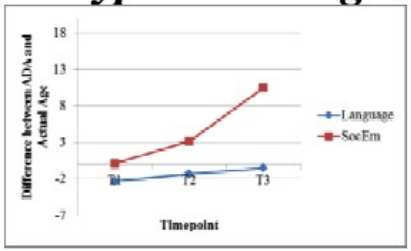
East Coast Collaborative for Enhancing Language and Literacy (ECCELL)

Level	Activities
Child	Language and Literacy Curriculum in Classrooms
Parents	Basic Education and English as a Second Language Classes
Familial	Parent-Child Practices in Home Visits and Small Groups
State	Coordination and Continuity

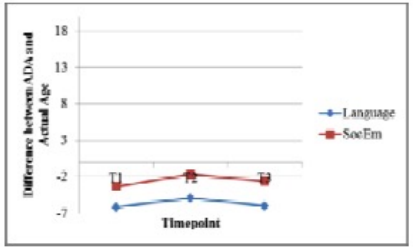
High Older



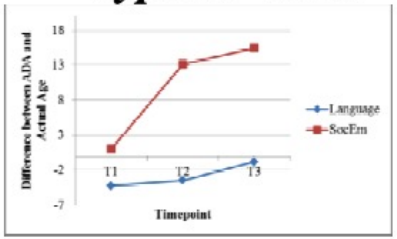
Typical Younger



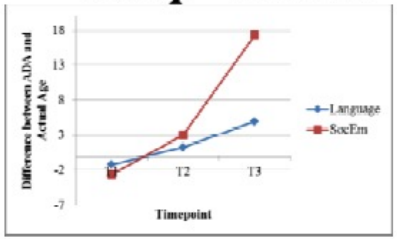
Risk



Typical Older

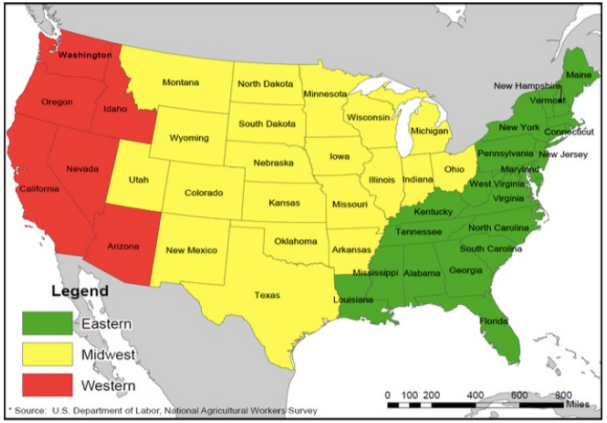


Steep Growth



UMBC

Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Study



- First national-representative study to **directly assess** MSFW children (infants, toddlers, and preschoolers)
- **Classroom Observations**
- **Cultural, linguistic and mobility** experiences

UMBC

	CENTRAL DOMAINS				
	APPROACHES TO LEARNING	SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	LANGUAGE AND LITERACY	COGNITION	PERCEPTUAL, MOTOR, AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT
▲ INFANT/ TODDLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Cognition	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
● PRESCHOOLER DOMAINS	Approaches to Learning	Social and Emotional Development	Language and Communication	Mathematics Development	Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development
			Literacy	Scientific Reasoning	

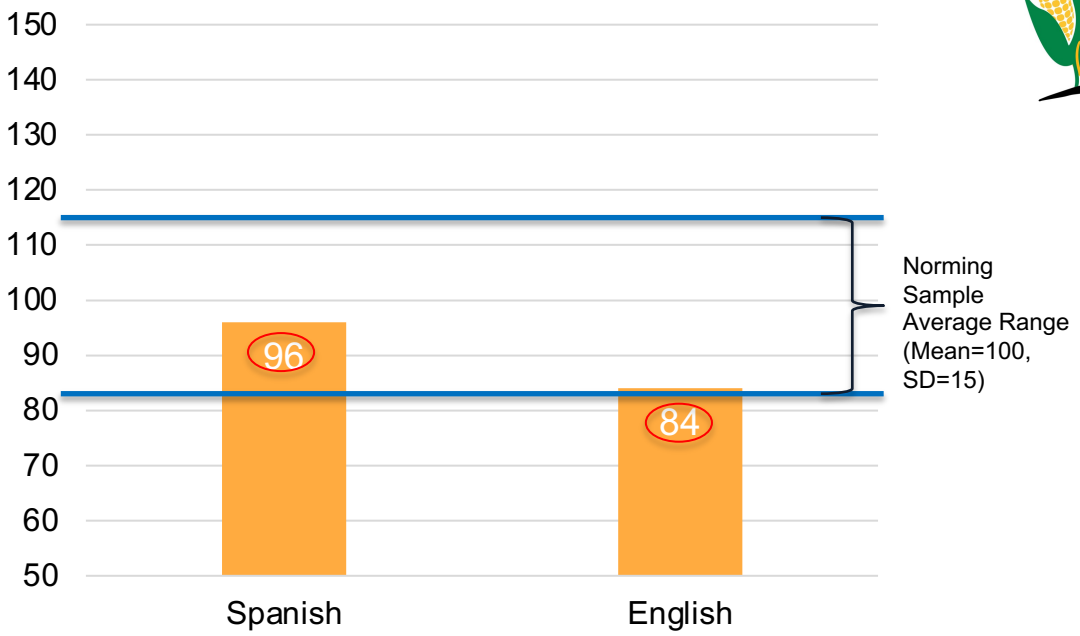
How do you currently support MSHS children's language and literacy development? How can it further be enhanced?

Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework

Migrant & Seasonal Head Start Study

36 Months Old and Older

Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey-Revised Normative Update (WMLS-R NU): Letter-Word Identification (English) and Identificación de letras y palabras (Spanish)



Early Literacy Assessed in Dominant Language

Challenge 3:

Engaging in actions for improved research, practice, training, and policy with dual language learner communities

In 2017, approximately $3.5 million was dedicated annually to improved assessment.

In this rule, we also codify **best practice in assessing dual language learners (DLL)** in § 1302.33(c)(2) by requiring programs to **administer language assessments to dual language learners in both English and their home language,** as needed, either directly or through interpreters.

These requirements will ensure that screening and assessment data is collected in both languages to **ensure a more complete understanding of these children's knowledge, skills and abilities.** 176

Spanish Virtual Environment for Social Information Processing (VESIP)

- ✓ Cultural and psychometric properties
- ✓ Language routing approach
- ✓ Think alouds, focus groups, Rasch

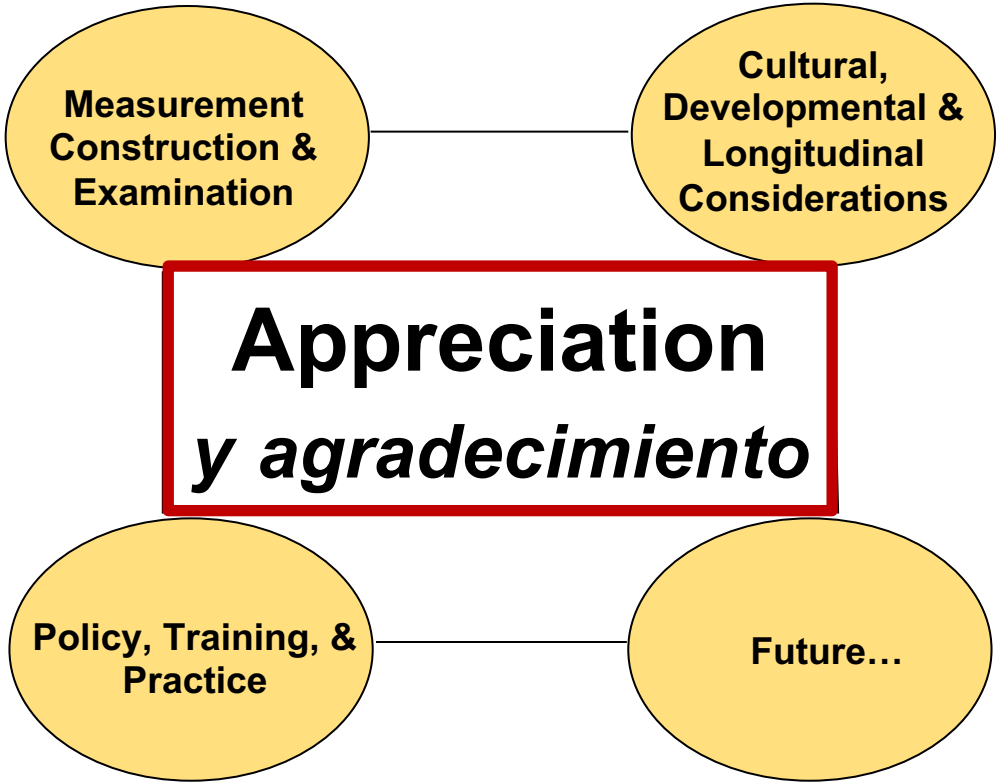
- <u>Collaborators</u>
  - Rush University Medical Center
- IES-funded

Training & Practice

Expand field's preparation in the selection, application, administration, and interpretation of multilingual measures

Research

Incorporate linguistic, cultural and psychometric features in measurement construction and examination



Contact Information