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Sharon Yandian: Okay. So this morning, we are honored and thrilled to have Dr. Fred Genesee seated here. He's a professor here at the Psychology Department at McGill Univeristy in Montreal. He has consulted on second and foreign language and bilingual education in countries around the world, including our own: Japan, Spain, Germany, Estonia, Hong Kong, Latvia, Russia and Italy.

He's served on the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages board of directors for seven years, including as president, and he's a member of the executive committee of the American Association of Applied Lingustics, Forgeing Language Standards Steering Committee of the American Council on the Teaching of Forgein Languages and the ESL Committee on Performance and Assessment Standards.

His current research interests include language acquisition in preschool biligual children, cross-language adoption children, the language and academic development of students, at risk and bilingual programs, and he's the author of numerous professional and scientific research reports and books. A couple include "Trends in Bilingual Acquisition" and "Dual Language Development and Disorders", which is the one you may want to take advantage of today, at the book signing at noon. On a personal note, I don't know if Fred knows this.

I was introduced to his work in around 1994, when I was doing my graduate studies, and he edited this wonderful book, which I still refer to: "Educating Second Language Children: The Whole Child, The Whole Curriculum, The Whole Community," and I think Patton Tabors, who is also speaking, had a piece in that book, and I was introduced to many others there, and so, for me, it's really amazing to able to have you with us today.

He also -- for those grantees who shouted out that participated in the CRADLE Project through the Early Head Start National Resource Center, he was a wonderful addition and guide, and I know that the Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal, the Americal Indian/Alaskan Native Programs who participanted feel the same way, and it's one of the reasons we wanted to bring him to the larger group because not only the message he shares, but the way he makes the research accessible to us...

...so today he's going to address the myths and realities about dual language learning. Please join me in welcoming Dr. Genesee [Applause].

Dr. Fred Genesee: Well thank you very much, Sharon, and thank you for inviting me to be part of this sort of historic event, I guess. It is a real pleasure to be here with you all this morning, and there's a session actually this afternoon where we can continue this discussion if you're interested, but I want to start off by saying I've never been at an event like this where not only are we ahead of schedule -- by 15 minutes -- but you can ask 1500 people to take a 15-minute coffee break and they do. It's amazing! [Laughter]

It sort of reminds me about a joke about Canadians. Canadians have this reputation -- I'm not sure it's true -- about being nice and polite and obedient, and so the joke is, "What do you have to do to get 100 drunk Canadians out of a swimming pool?" You say, "Please get out of the swimming pool." [Laughter] So I think you guys, based on your performance this morning, could be honorary Canadians. [Laughter] Also before I start, I'd like to thank Mac in the back for helping me sort out my slides.

The animation got messed up in the translation, so I think we're back on track. So what I would like to do with you this morning is to talk about a number of myths about dual language development, and although it's a little bit clichï¿½ to start off the talk about this type in this way, I thought it would be useful to define a myth, so a myth is a popular belief or tradition that has grown up around something or someone.

It's a belief that embodies the ideals and institutions of a society or segment of society, and another definition, which is a little bit more succinct, is: myth is an unfounded or false notion or belief that may reflect an individual's belief or it may reflect the beliefs or attitudes of a whole society. Any why would I start things off this way, because myths matter.

Myths matter, because the myths you hold about the children you are working with shape your decisions, and pessimistic myths about dual language learning can result in improverished language learning environments for the children that you are working with -- not only language learning but learning in general. So I think it is very, very important for all educators -- I am going to refer to you all as educators because that's my background, and I know that that is not a term that's widely used here...

...but everybody here in Early Head Start and Head Start is really infuenced by certain kinds of myths, and so I want to take this opportunity this morning to talk about, "What are some common myths about dual language learning?" and to give you some research backgrounds on the validity of these myths.

Now I think it probably isn't necessary to ask this question, but I will anyway, and that is, "Why talk about dual language learners?" As you've already heard up to one-third of the children who are served by Early Head Start or Head Start speak a language other than at home, and so in the process of their Early Head Start or Head Start experience -- or their preschool lives in general -- these children will be learning two languages: the home language and English.

Some of these children will go on to continue to learn two languages or maybe three languages. Some children may actually loose the first language in the process of learning English, but in any case, these children -- for our purposes here -- are really dual language learners, because when they come to your programs, they speak another language, and you're also going to be involved in helping them to acquire English to some extent. So I'm going to be talking about these children because they are a significant constituent of the children that you're serving.

This is not necessarily to say that I'm advocating that the programs that you all work in are necessarily going to be bilingual or dual language programs. Some of you may work in programs that are focusing on home language, some of you may be in programs that are focusing on English only, and some of you may be working in dual language programs.

But hopefully, in the course of this discussion or at the end of this discussion, you'll have a little bit more information, which may help you decide which kinds of programs might be most suitable for children you're serving and for the communities that you're living in.

And so these are my goals: to review research findings on a number of common myths that surround dual language learning, and I want to describe the implications of research findings on or concerning these myths, and concerning dual language learners, with respect to the kinds of the learning environments we create for them, either in Early Head Start or Head Start environments, or the kinds of environments that parents create at home, because parents obviously have a very important role to play in all this.

And I want, then, to go on to talk about what might be appropriate learning environments for dual language learning learners, whether it's in the home environment, or whether it's in the environments in which you are working with them, so we have a lot of ground to cover. I am delighted that you had an early break. You now have two coffees surging through your bodies, so you're all revved up and ready to attend and listen.

But before I actually get into the myths, I want to issue a number of caveats or cautions because often we -- in this particular case, we think that there might be one "magic" -- what I call "the magic model" -- there's one way to work with dual language children. And in fact, that's not the case -- there's no one best method for delivering services for dual language children...

...because the model which is most appropriate and optimal for a given setting is really going to depend upon a variety of factors, including the community that you're working in, the personnel that you have available, the goals or desires of the parents and the community at large that you're working in. All of these issues -- and others -- will shape what would be an optimal program for you.

My personal favorite is the dual language program, but it may well be that you're in an environment that where that is

simply not realistic for any number of reasons. The other reason why we don't need to believe that there's one magic method for every site is that dual language learners, like all children, are very very resourceful learners.

They can learn very, very well, with very high degrees of competence, in a variety of different environments, and even if your goal might be dual language competence for these children, there may be different models for achieving that competence with the children, because they don't need to do it in one way. My experience has indicated to me that it's really the adults who need the "magic method", not the children, [Laughter] but that's one of my main... one of my main caveats to start off with.

So just to pursue this a little bit further, the best program will really need to take into account a number of different factors, including the Head Start Program Performance Standards, which I'm sure all of you are familiar with, local goals and motivations, "What does your community want for itself and for its children?"

You might want dual language learning, but it could be that you're in an environment where parents are really more concerned about their children learning English, so you have to contend with those kinds of motivations and desires within your own.. within the community that you're serving.

You also have to take into account state and local regulations. I think, so far, programs of this sort have not been overly regulated with respect to use of language. I'm not sure, but in some cases there may be regulations with respect to what you are doing you really have to take account of. But there are also realities about the local population. "How many different languages are spoken?" and so forth and so on. What kinds of local resources do you have?

"Do you have personnel who can work in these other languages along with English?" and so forth and so on. So all of these factors need to be considered as you're looking at the kinds of language programs you want to provide to the children you're working with.

There's another caveat that I would like to issue at the beginning, and that is that there's this notion that research has all the answers. Now probably nobody in this room really believes this, but we're often led to believe from politicians and legislators that all of our decisions have to be based on research findings.

And the reality is, that research does not have all of the answers. By its very nature, research looks at complex issues in simple ways, because if you allow too much complexity into your research, then you can't pin down or interpret very accurately what the results mean. So, but the realities in which you're working, and the realities in which these children are growing up, are very, very complex.

That kind of complexity is rarely -- if ever -- examined systematically by researchers, not because we don't want to look at those complexities, but because, as I said, it's very hard to actually interpret your results if the design is too complex. The other reason why research doesn't have all answers is that researchers have only studied some of the issues that might be important to you, and so you might be interested in certain things that simply have not been examined by researchers.

So, you can't wait for researchers to examine those issues before you can make your own decisions, you have to make the decisions right away. This is a huge issue within the school age situation, where educators are increasingly being compelled to make evidence-based decisions about reading or language development when there's not simply enough evidence of the type that educators need in order to make sound decisions.

So, in the meantime, waiting for that research, you have to make your own decisions, and so there's always a certain amount of professional judgment that is required, and this is where your role as leaders within the Early Head Start and Head Start group is critical. So, as I go along and talk about some of these issues, what I thought I would do is explicitly point out what I think some of the implications of these thoughts are -- or the research findings are -- that I am going review for you.

I think one of the implications of this business of this "no one magic method" and "research doesn't have all the answers" is that Early Head Start and Head Start leaders such as yourself have a very important role to play in

collecting and analyzing information within your own communities so that you can make your own decisions, because you're not going to find the information and data that you need in the research in every case -- so you need to become your own researchers, in a sense.

And that information is going to pertain to a variety of different kinds of information about the community, the children, the languages which they speak, the levels of literacy in the families, and so forth and so on; parents' attitudes, their beliefs and goals. All of these are very, very important pieces of evidence which you need to have at your disposition so that you can design the program that is optimal for you.

But I think it goes beyond that. I think that Early Head Start and Head Start leaders have a role to play as local action researchers. In other words, once you've made certain kinds of decisions about materials to use, or programs to implement, or methods to try, then I think that it's important to -- in your own informal way -- keep track of how that's working, and whether it's working the way you want, so that you can make decisions to modify and optimize the situation.

Sometimes action research, which is really local research, which is not done in the same formal way that published research is, is actually more informative because it's grounded in the realities in which you're working, but I also think that one of the implications of this is that leaders such as yourself have a role to play to stay informed, and to promote, if you like, competence in the personnel that you're working with, so that they know the latest research findings to the extent that they're out there.

In other words, you have a role to play to help continually professionalize the people who are working with you and for you, and there are a variety of ways that you can do that: by having speakers come in -- local speaker come in and talk about research related to early language development, precursors of literacy development, and so on. Set up study groups where you have material that you read together, and you sit around at lunch or in the evening and talk about it.

You -- ultimately, I firmly believe that, while research has certain answers to give you or direction to give you, you're ultimately your own best sources of support and inspiration, because your collective experiences far outweigh -- in my guess -- the kinds of evidence that's available from research. So in order for those experiences to be wise, you need take on your own action research, and to stay as informed as you can with what researchers are saying.

So what are the myths that I would want to talk to you about? There's five, and that's why I am happy that we have a little bit more time this morning to talk about these, 'cause I wasn't sure I was going to get through all five of them before, but I think maybe now we will. One of the myths is the notion that early dual language learning leads to delays, deficits and confusions with respect to language development.

A second one is that bilingual code mixing is a sign of confusion, and is a source of concern when children learn two languages in the infant, toddler, and early childhood period. Another myth is that young children are linguistic sponges, and that we just sort of have to wave language at them and they acquire it. [Laughter] It's not only old people who have trouble learning languages; it's not that easy for children either. When you think of it, it takes them all year before they say anything, and then they only produce one word.

It's not fast, in my opinion. [Laughter] A fourth myth is that more exposure to English is better, and earlier exposure to English is better, and I'll give you some evidence that refutes that. It's actually a very complex issue. And finally a myth that is really just a chance for me to express my own personal opinions -- 'cause there's no evidence on this -- is the myth that, because I don't know anything besides English, that I can't help dual language learners acquire more than one language.

All right, so I want to share with you just some very, very common sense ways in which I think you probably could help dual language learners acquire two languages, and I'm sure many of you have better suggestions than the ones I am going to propose. So there's the agenda; let's get going!

One of the very common myths about children who learn two languages, either simultaneously or successively -- and by simultaneous, I mean children who literally begin to learn two languages from the day they're born, and in fact it

starts before they're born, or children who acquire one language in the first or second or third year of life and then they begin to acquire English after the second or third year of life, so they're really acquiring a second language on top of their first language. These are both categories of... these are both of dual language learners. All right.

The researchers refer to them as "simultaneous bilinguals" or "successive bilinguals" or "second language learners," and it's a very, very widely held fear by not only parents, but also educators, and in many cases even speech and language specialists, that children who are acquiring two languages in the early years are at risk for language delays, and so forth and so on as I mentioned before.

And to illustrate this, I've put up a quote from somebody named Judy Foreman -- probably we should take her name out. This woman probably hates me, I've used this quote all the time. [Laughter] If anybody meets her, tell her that I don't really dislike her, it's just that I think she's wrong. [Laughter]

And somebody sent me this: this is an interesting little story in itself, somebody from Los Angeles sent me this clipping from the Los Angeles Times, and the reason why they sent it to me is because the headline is actually very positive, because it says, "The Evidence Speaks Well of Bilingualism's Effect on Kids." And so my colleague sent this to me because it's rare that you get good publicity about bilingualism in southern California.

And he said, "Look, this is great news!" but it's interesting when you go a little bit further the first line says, "Kids who grow up in bilingual homes may be slower to speak." And this is a mild version of this myth and it's the notion that, because children are possibly learning two languages, and in this case at the same time, it's necessarily harder and they are going to have to take longer to sort things out. So it's that kind of myth that I want to address at this time.

So this myth I think is based on another myth, which I would call the myth of the monolingual brain. In a community such as ours in North America, even though we are not really a monolingual community, we're led to believe that monolingualism is the norm, and therefore, learning one language is normal.

Learning more than one language is not the norm and therefore it's not normal, and the reason why they believe this -- people believe this -- is because I think they fundamentally believe that the human brain is designed to acquire one language efficiently, effectively, and without much fuss. All right.

But, therefore, children who are acquiring an additional language in the early years of development are really challenged to acquire that language, because the machinery of the brain that's there to acquire language is really being challenged, and there's a specific version of this myth that says that children acquiring two languages -- especially if they acquire them at the same time, which is true for some of the children you're working with -- that they actually treat these two languages as if they are part of a single system.

And this is what we call the unilingual system, or the unified language system. In other words, the child may be hearing English and Spanish from the parents at home, or in the community, but in the initial stages between -- of one and two years of age -- the child is treating the input from these two languages as if it's part of a single language system, and as a result of that, the child needs extra time in order to separate the two languages.

In one version of this theory -- and this was actually widely believed until the late seventies -- it wasn't until the third year of life that simultaneous bilingual children were able to actually separate out the two languages, so it was really only around that period of development when people believed that simultaneous bilingual children were actually bilingual.

Up to then, it was thought that they were actually monolingual, and that the language system that was represented in their brains was really a mixture of the two languages that they had been exposed to. I'm going to come back to this later, but the evidence that people use to support this theory was that young bilingual children code mix, and the explanation of code-mixing, I'm sure... Does anybody not know what code-mixing is? No? Okay, and all of you who are bilingual code-mix so you all do it.

And the idea was, when children code mix, they're code mixing because the words from the two languages are mixed

up in their brains, and so when they open their mouths, English and Spanish, or English and Korean, come out because they have no way of separating the two systems.

So in its extreme form, this myth leads people to believe that children may not fully acquire their two languages, and an even more extreme version, it's thought that children may be at risk for language impairment because the challenge to language and learning in these children is simply too great, so I want to address those issues.

The reality is -- and there's been a lot of research that I've been doing over the last 20 years, and other people in the U.S.: Barbara Pearson, who is here at this meeting as well, has done research on this in the U.S., and lots of European researchers have done research on this issue -- has demonstrated that dual language learning, and even simultaneous acquisition of two languages from birth, is not a cognitive challenge for most children.

There's general consensus within the research field -- which is rare that there's consensus within the research field -- but there is general consensus that children can acquire two languages, other things being equal, more or less as easily as one. If there's a challenge to learning the language, it's not due to the cognitive capacity of the children, but it's probably more related to socio-cultural factors -- in other words, the environment around them -- rather than the child's actual cognitive abilities.

And it also appears from this research that, while monolingular children acquire competence in the language, there's room left over in the machinery of the brain that's involved in language learning for learning another language. It's not the case that learning one language takes up all the neuro-cognitive space you have. There is space left over, or there's parallel space.

You can learn two languages in parallel with one another, and you're not using up all of your brain cells. In fact, what we know from brain research is there's a period in development when children will go through a massive proliferation in the development of neurons, and that over time, what happens is the neurons which we are not used are useful, they actually start to trite or die back -- a process called pruning -- so that there is this incredible proliferation of neurons in the brain and they're there to be used.

If they're not used, it's sort like, use it or lose it. Okay, so bilingualism is a good chance to use these extra cells -- these cells that these children have.

So the other consensus within the field, I think, to a large extent, is that any challenges, or the successes of dual languages learners, are probably more related to the learning environment in which they grow up in, and this is where your role is so critically important, but let me just give you a little bit of data here to back up what I am saying. I promise you I'm not going to give you too much data, but I think it's important for you to see some of this.

This is a graphic representation of some of the important early milestones in language development that monolingular children go through. I had wanted this to be animated, but it didn't work out -- just look at the labels below the title. So these are critical milestones, they're not all of them, but they're representative of what children go through when they're acquiring their first language and only language.

They begin to segment words from the speech stream, they start to babble around ten to twelve months of age. They produce their first words, on average, around twelve months of age. There's a thing call the vocabulary growth spurt around 18 months of age. This is what I was referring to before: children don't start to learn words quickly until 18 months of age, so it takes them 18 months before they really get beyond the 50 words stage, so I want to come back to this later on.

They start to produce word combinations usually around 20 - 24 months of age, and so forth and so on. These are averages, and like all averages, they don't describe what all children do. There's enormous variation in when individual children go through these milestones, and I'm sure all of you who have children can attest to this, even within the same family. Some kids will produce their first words right on schedule at twelve months of age; other children, it can take them much longer.

I had a nephew who didn't start to talk until he was three years of age and he is one of the most verbal people I know, and other children produce their first words before, so you always have to keep in mind, when you see these kind of data, that they're averages, and there's huge variation in children as to whether they conform to these timelines or not.

Now, the good new is, the research that has been conducted on simultaneous bilingular children supports the idea that these bilingular children go through these milestones at more or less the same age as monolingular children do, so the fact that they're acquiring two languages from birth, in this case, doesn't actually slow them down significantly, other things being equal. So in this regard there's no reason to expect that bilingual children will be slower or impaired in their language development as a result of exposure to two languages.

Now, this does not mean that bilingual children are going to be identical to monolingular children. If they were the same as monolingular children, we would call them monolingual; they're bilingual, and there are differences. So for example with respect to vocabulary, it's not uncommon to find that bilingual children, dual language learners, the vocabulary in each language is not the same as the vocabulary of monolingual children.

They may have fewer words in each language in the beginning than monolingular children, or they may have a different repertoire of vocabulary items within each language. This is probably due to the sort of distributed nature of their language learning. They may learn English in one environment and Spanish in another environment, and so the words they're learning in each language are words that are characteristic of those environments. If the environments are not identical, then their vocabularies will not be identical.

But it's also interesting to point out -- and this is research that Barbara Pearson did -- which shows that, if you simply count up words, and you treat English separately from Korean and Spanish, then bilingual children might look like they're behind at monolingual children, but in fact, if you look at what's called their conceptual vocabulary, you find that bilingular children usually have the same size vocabulary overall as monolingular children, and in some cases, probably even larger.

And conceptual vocabulary is just simply giving the child credit for every word they know for concept, whether the word is in language A or language B. All right. So it's always very important when you look at bilingual children, that you look at their competence in both languages. Because if you only look at the competence in one language you are only getting half of the story. Okay.

There's other ways in which bilingual children might be different, and that is with respect to their patterns of language use, and by that, I mean the sort of social customs that they involve: whether they, their turn-taking abilities, the way they address one another, as Frank was pointing out, and so on.

Bilingual children may use language in different ways because they live in social communities which use languages in different ways, so we shouldn't expect bilingual children to look identical to monolingual children, but there's no reason to believe that their fundamental development will be different from monolingual children. Now just to drive this point home, I want to very quickly describe some research that has looked at children with language impairment.

Now, there's only two studies of this -- there should be more but there isn't, this is hard research to do -- but there's two studies that looked at children who are approximately six, seven, eight years of age who were bilingual and these were children who actually had been clinically diagnosed as being language-impaired, and language impairment is a thought to be genetically-based difficulty that some children have in acquiring language, first language or any language. It seems to be unrelated to other kinds of learning difficulties.

These are children who have normal cognitive intellectual development, normal social-emotional development; they have no known neurological problems and so forth and so on. So they have this one specific difficulty that they have trouble learning language, and their language learning difficulties show up in different ways, but for our purposes, that's really what you need to know. Now this is a group of children who you would imagine would have difficulty learning two languages.

They have trouble learning one language -- surely this difficulty is going to be worsened by having this impairment --

by having to learn two languages. Well, in research that we've done in Quebec, which has looked at English-French bilingual children, and in research that Vera Gutiï¿½rrez-Clellen and Wagner looked at Spanish English bilingual children...

...what both of us found was that children with language impairment who were bilingual had the same patterns of impairment as monolingual children with impairment, and the severity of their impairment was the same as that of monolingual children with impairment. So in other words, even though they were language impaired, they weren't worse off than similar impaired children who were monolingual, and at the same time they were bilingual.

So there's this remarkable ability that the human brain has, especially in children's brains, that even though it has trouble learning language, it doesn't seem that learning two languages, in these cases simultaneously, necessarily makes the difficulty worse, so this is really diametrically opposed to this myth that dual language learning is a challenge for children, because it shows that you can have a language learning impairment and still be bilingual.

And one further point I want to make here before I move on is that there's growing evidence that children who are bilingual -- and adults who are bilingual, for that matter -- enjoy certain kinds of cognitive benefits, so research by Ellen Bialystok from York University in Toronto has shown that proficient bilinguals show certain enhancements of what are called the executive functions of the brain.

These are well established neurological systems within the frontal areas of the brain that control the flow of information. They're involved in decision making, involved in planning and so on -- that bilingual children actually are superior in these executive functions in comparison to monolinguals.

I also put at the very end here that these kinds of results persist to adulthood, and there's recent research that Ellen has that shows that people who suffer from Alzheimer's -- if they're bilingular -- that there's a four-year delay in the onset of Alzheimer's in bilinguals in comparison to monolinguals, so for some of us in this room, that's a good piece of news; not too soon I hope. [Laughter]

Now, one of the things that very important about this research is that these advantages that people find in the cognitive domain with respect to bilinguals really only show up in the case of highly proficient bilinguals. You don't get these kinds of advantages in children or adults who simply have taken Spanish 101, like me.

Okay, so in order -- if you're making a case that you want a dual language program because it is cognitively beneficial to your learners, what these results indicate is that you have to take this seriously. You have to be very seriously committed to these children learning two languages. You have to create as enriched a learning environment as possible, so that can happen, and I am going to come back that later on.

So what are the implications? One is that you can expect that dual language learners, while they go through more or less the same developmental patterns as monolingual children, they're also going to be different from monolingual children because they're bilingual.

We shouldn't assume that the differences that these children present in their language competencies -- or in their language use -- are necessarily signs of problems or difficulties. They're just differences. And also, I think the implication is that we should be enriching dual language learners' language learning environment so that we can minimize the differences that they might exhibit, relative to monolinguals. So take this vocabulary issue.

If we enrich the opportunities for bilingual children to acquire vocabulary, then any differences that might differentiate them from monolinguals can be reduced, because we're giving them enhanced opportunities to expand their vocabulary skills. So what we should be doing in general with these children is enriching their language learning environment, not pulling back. And also as I said, we should be promoting dual language learning in the home as well as in Head Start and Early Head Start programs so that they can benefit from these cognitive advantages.

A second myth is a myth of code-mixing. How many of you heard this myth? That code-mixing is bad and we should discourage children from code-mixing. Yes, how many of you believe this? You're not going to admit it probably.

[Laughter]

Well, I bet deep down a lot of you do believe this, and I certainly know that lots of parents and lots of speech and language specialists believe in this. And the myth here is that -- as I mentioned before -- the children code-mix, that is, they use English and Spanish words, or French and English words, or Korean and English words, in the same sentence, because in fact the two languages are represented neuro-cognitively as an undifferentiated system, so they're coming out as code-mixing because they're represented in a mixed-up way.

Now the reality is that bilingual code-mixing is not a sign of confusion at all. In fact, it's a linguistic and a communicative resource that bilingual children have and the same with bilingual adults have it. There's a lot of evidence that I've done personally that shows that young dual language learners can use their two languages appropriately.

They know what language to use with whom, and if they don't do it right away, they just need a little time with people they're not familiar with to figure out which language they should be using, and there's also evidence that they use code-mixing as a linguistic resource to fill in lexical gaps, and I think that's my next slide.

Here's data from two children -- Wayne and Felix. These were two little boys who were learning French and English in Montreal. They were very young -- these children were between 18 and 24 months of age -- and we did a study where we looked at their language use over the stretch of three weeks. I won't get into the details, but we had very, very detailed records of how these children were learning their two languages, using their two languages.

And then we went back and looked at every instance in which they used French with an English-speaking person and English with a French speaking person, and what we found for Wayne is that over 90 percent of the time, that he did that, it's because he didn't know the word in the appropriate language, so when he used French in an English context it's because he didn't know the English word.

When he used English in a French context, it's because he didn't know the French word, so they were using and similarly -- for Felix it was less so, it was 65 percent of the time but what it's indicating to us is that, far from being a sign of confusion or problematic language behavior, code-mixing is actually a communicative resource for these children. They're talking away in English, they want to say something in English, but they don't have the word in English, but they have it in French, so they use the French word.

This is actually very resourceful, and remember, these children are 18 to 24 months of age. In their environments, this is a strategy that also makes sense because most the the adults around these children know these two languages well enough to figure out what they're saying.

So there's a lot of evidence of this sort that suggests that, far from being a sign of linguistic confusion, code-mixing is actually a kind of communicative resource for these children and that they will often use the other language in order to fill in gaps in the language that they're using at that time. Now there're other reasons why children code-mix. They might code-mix because there's a word that exists in Spanish but really doesn't have an equivalent in English.

So it's just -- you know, when this happens all the time -- in English there's certain thing we -- that's why we borrow words. English is a language that has borrowed words from every other language in the world. We don't know it anymore, because we just think these are English words.

But "entrepreneur" -- you know, there's a famous thing that George Bush said: "The problem with the French is their economic problems, they don't even have a word for 'entrepreneur'." [Laughter] Well, I hope I'm not being politically incorrect, [Laughter] swaying the upcoming vote. [Applause] But this is an example of filling in gaps, so English is notorious for taking words from all sorts of languages, using them for a while as a foreign language word, and then slowly assimilating it into English. Bilingual children do this all the time.

And for some of these words, they will continue to use them as long words because they're just more appropriate, so there're lots of reasons why children code-mix and that are unrelated to the notion that it's confusion. Also children

may code-mix because it's part of the socio-cultural context in which they're living. And this is a quote from a newspaper that talks about Hallmark has cards which are in Spanglish -- so there's a combination of English and Spanish.

Now, of course kids are going to code-mix if people around them code-mix, because that's a quality -- that's a characteristic of the environment that they're living in. In Montreal, everybody speaks English, French and other languages. People code-mix all the time. That doesn't mean we're confused, that just mean we know two languages. Okay. One final point that I want to make is that child code-mixing is really looked down upon by many people because they think it's an ungrammatical form of the language.

To be perfectly blunt, people think it is the bastardization of the language. Monolinguals think this a lot, right, because they can't do it, [laughter] but they think that when people are code-mixing they're really violating the grammatical rules of both languages.

There's a lot of research on this with adults. This shows this is simply not true. 90 percent of the time, when adults code-mix within a sentence, they are actually code-mixing in a way that respects the grammatical constraints of both languages, and we and other people have done research that looks at code-mixing in young bilingual children, and once again you find, from the earliest stages of language development, when bilingual children are code-mixing, they do it in a way that conforms to the grammars of the two languages.

I've given you some examples in Spanish and English -- not my two strongest languages -- but I hope these examples are right. The first three examples -- these are perfectly correct utterances, because the child has put in the English word in this utterance at a point where the equivalent Spanish word would also be appropriate.

They're not breaking the grammatical rules of Spanish or English. Right? If you look at number four, this would be wrong because the child's putting the object pronoun before -- he's using an English object pronoun before the Spanish verb, when an English object pronoun should occur after a verb, so this a place where English and Spanish differ, and children simply -- 95 percent of the time, they will not produce these kinds of utterances.

They will produce the other three kinds, but not this kind. So we did an analysis of 10,000 utterances produced by 10 bilingual children, and we only found three instances of this type, so children know that the languages -- you can't switch at certain points in language, because you would be making a grammatical error. Okay, for fun, you might want to look at your children and see how they are code-mixing.

I'll guarantee that most of it's going to be perfectly correct, but it sounds funny to people because we're not supposed to mix. But who says we shouldn't mix? Right? Okay. Implications. Do not worry if dual language learners use both languages at the same time, and do not insist that they use their two languages separately. They will learn to do -- use these languages separately, if that's appropriate. There's this widely held belief that children will learn two languages better if we use the one person-one language rule.

How many of you have heard of this rule? A few of you. Okay, this is the idea -- all parents who are raising their kids bilingually know this rule. The idea is, if you've got a couple where one parent speaks one language and the other speaks the other language, each parent should only use that language with the child.

The parent shouldn't jump back and forth between the languages, so it's called the one parent-one language rule, and it's usually advocated on the assumption that it'll avoid the child being confused, because there's going to be an association between each language and each parent. There's no evidence that children need this. I think it's a very good rule for parents. Parents are very happy doing it.

It tells them when they should use each language, and it also guarantees the children get an equal... more-or-less equal exposure to both languages, but it's not at all clear that children need this in order to separate the languages. If the languages are used more or less separately outside the home, children will get it, eventually.

Also, another implication of this is, if you're working in a dual language program, you shouldn't feel -- this is sort of

stretching a bit, but you shouldn't feel that you have to provide simultaneous translation for children. If you're saying something to them in Spanish, don't repeat it in English. They don't need it. They'll learn to comprehend each language better if you don't translate back and forth.

Now you might translate for other reasons: to show that words in English and Spanish are different, or they're the same, there's cognates, there's non-cognates, so forth and so on, but don't use translation as a mechanism for compensating for the fact that they're learning two languages. Okay. I also suggest that you can code-mix yourself.

There's nothing wrong with young children seeing people they respect code-mixing -- and then you can set the limits on code-mixing if you're actually among someone who's willing to code-mix -- and also at other times you don't code-mix. So don't feel you have to avoid code-mixing; there's nothing wrong with it. The third myth is that the myth of... that children are linguistic sponges. The idea is that children can learn languages very quickly and very efficiently, and the reality of this is actually much more complex than that.

In general, children are much more successful language learners than adults, but as I said a couple of times, children are actually not all that fast from a language learning point of view, and, furthermore, there's huge individual differences in children's rates of language development. Some children acquire language very quickly, some children acquire it much more slowly, and in general, language learning takes time.

So the reason I mentioned this -- if you're working in a dual language program with dual language learners, and they seem to be taking a lot of time, that may be perfectly normal for that child. It doesn't necessarily mean they're in trouble, and it doesn't necessarily mean that dual language learning increases the burden of learning. Learning takes time. What's more important, in my opinion, rather than some of these other issues, is the quality of the learning environment.

The quality of the environment they're in will influence the rate and quality of their language learning more than anything else -- even more than time per se -- and here I want to make a distinction between what people refer to as "language for social communication" and "language for thinking and literacy," because I think in the early childhood years, we need to be working not only on social communication with children and dual language learners...

...but we also should be beginning to work on their language for later literacy and later academic development, and the zero-to-five span is actually a good time for that to start. And so, just to illustrate this distinction, here's a conversation from a seven-year-old -- this is not the age group you're working with -- in a school in Alberta actually.

This is a second language learner who's talking to his teacher, and you can see that this job looks quite fluent, but reality is, this is a social conversation where the child is providing very simple responses to rather factual questions, and the child's language competence does not have to be stretched very much, and in the long run, when children go to school, they need to have language skills that go beyond social communication.

They need language skills which will help them acquire literacy skills, and which will help them to think critically in academic domains, so in order for this to happen, we need to always be working on enriching children's language learning environment, and in particular, I think the social communicative aspects of language comes easily and naturally for many of us, but we sometimes don't fully appreciate how important it is to also focus on these other kinds of language skills...

...and this is where the home becomes very important because, there's a lot of discussion about which language parents of dual language learners should use at home -- you know, depending upon which side of the divide you're on, some people believe that parents of dual language learners should only use English because it'll expedite the acquisition of English. I'm going to come to that later.

Other people, such as myself, believe that parents should use the home language at home, so that children develop competence in the home language, but there's research now that suggests that it's not sufficient for parents to simply use the home language at home -- it's how they use the language at home that really matters, and if parents use the home language in more enriched ways, then children are likely to acquire some of these pre-literacy and academic

language skills.

I'm not saying we're treating the home as a school environment, what I'm saying is that the kinds of interactions between parents and children can be set up in such a way that they're having fun, it's developmentally appropriate, but they're starting to acquire some of these precursor language skills. So what I'm talking about -- enriching the home language environment to promote mental linguistic awareness -- this is a perfect thing for bilingual kids, talking about how these languages are similar and different.

"This word also exists in that language, do they mean the same things?" You can do these things with very young children, teaching children the names and sounds of letters of the alphabet. This is one of the single most significant predictors of early reading development of any other predictor.

Children who know the sounds and the names of the letters have a head start when it comes to learning to read later on: giving children experiences with print material, reading to them, using wordless picture books, using books with words, familiarizing children with print and how print functions, also developing their vocabulary skills so that they're broader and deeper and so forth and so on.

So my point here is that it's important that -- as we think about language development for all children, but dual language children -- in general, we think about stretching their language competencies to include not only social communication skills, but also these sort of pre-literacy and cognitive language-related skills.

So what are the implications of this? As you're playing with children, as you're doing what would be developmentally appropriate with these children, think about ways in which you can turn these games into activities that are going to build their vocabulary and conceptual skills.

Don't make it just fun -- you can make it fun and also instructional in a sense, or at least laying the foundations for these other important skills, and in particular, what I think is important is that you have a very very important role in preparing children for early schooling, and especially literacy. And there's lots of things that can be done in the zero-to-five period -- not so much in the zero-to-one, obviously, but you can do lots of literacy things with the youngest of children.

A lot of these activities should be part and parcel of what you're doing with children, so either in the home language or in English. All right. So I've just given you some suggestions here. It's always important, of course, that these activities be developmentally appropriate, so that you don't use things that are appropriate for older children, but not with children that you're working with, but think about enriching their language environment. Use language to build their cognitive abilities even when they're young.

Get them to talk about their language, or you talk about how their languages are similar or different. Think about numbers, think about how words are used to make comparisons and so forth and so on. These are all activities that can be fun and developmentally appropriate, but they're also pushing these children's language development in ways that will support their later schooling, and it just really takes thoughtfulness and time to do some of this, and that you can look at it on your own.

Okay, I also think this has significant implications for parents. Parents are an important part of who you work with.

I personally -- the research really suggests that it's important for parents who do not speak English very well at home, that they use the native language or the home language, because then their relationship with their children is going to be much more solid and deeper, but it's also important to try and work with parents in ways that will get them to expand the ways in which and enrich the ways in which they use the home language, so it's not simply using the home language itself that's going to help these children in the long run.

That is important, but it's also how they use the language which is critically important, so you may need to work with parents to help them create activities that they can engage in with their children that will serve some of these other pre-literacy and early cognitive developmental issues that I talked about, and I think that in some communities you may

need to be fairly supportive in helping parents do that, because parents may not know how to do it. And in fact, they may not believe it's their role to do it...

...so there are some cultural groups, unlike sort of Europeanized groups such as Anglo-Saxons and most mainstream Americans and Canadians. Parents see their role as being educational as well as social and everything else, but there're cultural groups that don't believe that. They believe it's schools that "should be educating my child and my role is to socialize the child, teach the child to be a good person and to behave well."

But just as children have to acculturate to their larger environment, parents may also have to acculturate to the realities of schooling in the United States, and one of their roles could be to use the native language in ways that will support later literacy and academic language development, in ways that are culturally appropriate for them...

...and some of you are already probably doing this, providing parents with materials and guidance on how to use those materials that will stretch, not only their children's language competencies, when you think of it, but their own. And there's lots of things that parents can do.

The next myth that I want to talk about is "more is better" and "earlier is better," and I think this is a particularly important issue for us, because it speaks to this general myth in the environment at large, that the best way for children who don't speak English at home to learn English is for them to start early and to get only English.

So this is where this myth comes from, and we now have laws which are prohibiting the use of other languages in school, and so forth and so on, and the basic assumption here is, the more time children spend on English and the sooner they start that, the better off they are. Now the research is not actually straightforward on this.

There is evidence that the amount of time children spend in English does not have a direct impact on their competence in English, even dual language learners, but the amount of time they spend with the home language does have an affect on how competent they are in the home language.

And this is evidence that we found in the United States, we found this in Canada, that actually isn't going to have some of the negative consequences you might think of, if you think of this as a zero sum game, because certain aspects of home language development are going support the acquisition of English.

Now this may seem counter-intuitive, but the reason for this is best illustrated by a diagram that Jim Cummins presented some time ago. This is from a publication in 2000, but it actually pre-dates that, and Cummins conceptualizes competence in two languages with the metaphor of two icebergs, and as we all know, supposedly nine-tenths of the iceberg is below the surface, and only one-tenth is above the surface.

So what we see in bilinguals is the surface, so the tip of the iceberg for language one and the tip of the iceberg for language two are visible to us, and those kinds of language skills which are largely social in nature are quite distinct in the two languages. But below the surface, there are what he would call central operating systems or common underlying proficiencies, so these are language-related skills which, once acquired in one language, will actually generalize to any other language...

...and the best examples of these are things like mental linguistic awareness, the alphabetic principles and so on. So this kind of metaphor explains why promoting these children's home language also is a way of helping them to learn English more efficiently.

I won't get into this but you can read this on your own; if you actually look at school age children, there's a lot of evidence that school-age children who have lots of support for the home language in bilingual programs significantly outperform similar children in English only programs, but since I'm running out of time I'm just going to skip over that.

Now one of the things, and I think I'm probably going to end here because I am running out of time... Yes, it's okay? One of the things that's very important about this, and let me just go back, is that the learning environment matters.

You can actually... dual language learners can have their cake and eat it too. In other words, they can maintain the home language and do really well in English, so that development of the home language doesn't come at the expense of English. All right.

And in that sense, I mean they can have their cake and eat it too, and this is most likely to occur in learning environments that we call additive bilingual environments. All right. So one of the -- it seems to me one of the chief challenges for you and the chief goals for those of you who want, are working with dual language children -- is to really create an additive, dual language learning environment. And let me just illustrate this with two newspaper clippings, this was from the New York Times, that somebody sent me this.

This is about people in New York City -- fairly wealthy people, I might add -- who are hiring nannies who are Spanish-speaking to take care of their children during the day, so that they can learn Spanish and English at the same time, and these parents are so highly motivated for their children to become bilingual, that there's a shortage of Spanish-speaking nannies in New York, [laughter] so they say.

But my general point is, here is a group of parents who are very keen on their children learning another language, believe that their children can learn another language, and they're going to set up an environment where this can happen. They're both working, so, during the day, the nanny is going to be using Spanish with these children. Now contrast that with this headline. [Laughter] All right. So this is the kind of social environment that many of you work in, and many of the children that we're serving live in.

They're led to believe that their maintenance of their home language is -- oops, I went too far -- is a risk to national security, as well as cohesiveness and everything else. Okay. This is a subtractive view of bilingualism.

The view that if you learn your home language, that this is, somehow or other, going to make you -- somehow or other -- make you a threat to social cohesion. So you can well imagine that professionals such as yourselves and children that you work with who experience this kind of subtractive view of bilingualism are not going to be as enthusiastic about promoting both languages as you need to be, if you're going to achieve high levels of bilingualism, if you're going to achieve this kind of cross linguistic transfer that we talked about...

...and if you're going to achieve the kind of cognitive advantages that researchers are showing is possible if you're fully proficient. All right. So I think these two newspaper clippings really indicate these contrasting views of bilingualism. Why is it that bilingualism important? First of all it's important so that you create a learning environment in children where they feel that they can learn English and they don't have to give up something else.

For young children, it's rather difficult for them to be told that the best way for them -- we don't do this explicitly, obviously -- but they're made to believe, or felt to believe or feel, that if they continue to use Spanish or Korean then they're really not going to fit in.

They're not going to learn English well enough, so they have to give up a part of themselves in order to fit in to this English environment, but this is not a very propitious learning environment for young children. Young children may not have the coping strategies that they need in order to deal with this, or they may not do it very enthusiastically.

Language is a fundamental part of who children are. If that language happens to be Spanish or some other language, then that language represents a fundamental aspect of who they are. Giving that up is not always easy. All right. So an additive view of bilingualism says to young learners, "You don't have to give it up in order to learn English. You can keep that going, and we're going to give you this as well." All right.

Now, another reason why additive bilingualism is important is that it allows this kind of boot-strapping that I talked about to occur. It allows for cross-linguistic transfer to occur, and the reason I say that is that this kind of boot-strapping, and this kind of transfer that is coming up in the research over and over again, is most likely to occur in children who have fairly good language skills in the native language, so if they have good pre-literacy skills in Spanish, then there's a lot of pre-literacy skills that can transfer to English.

If they don't have good pre-literacy skills in Spanish or Korean or whatever, there's nothing to transfer. So additive bilingualism is important because it creates a learning environment that supports the native language and then in turn that will support transfer and boot-strapping.

And finally this view of -- this additive view of bilingualism is important because it sets up high expectations, and my experience after 30 going on 40 years of doing research in this field is the single biggest mistake we make with young dual language learners is we underestimate what they can do, and when we underestimate what they can do, we create learning environments that also result in their underachieving.

And this additive view of bilingualism says that these children are capable of dual language learning to a high level of competence, and then we create learning environments that makes that happen, so I think it's really, really, very critical. Now this is where I will finish off. This myth is, "I only know English so I can't support dual language development." Nonsense.

There's lots you can do, and these are just some simple suggestions that, even if you don't speak these other languages, there's ways in which you can create an additive dual language learning environment within your program, with the children that you're working with. First of all, as a leader in Early Head Start or Head Start, you have an important role in promoting an attitude of additive bilingualism with all of the staff and personnel that you work with.

It's very hard I think, sometimes in the environment that we live in, to believe that what we're doing with dual language learners is good. I don't know about you, but when I'm on a plane and somebody says to me "What do you do?", I think twice about telling them that I work in bilingual education or I work with dual language learners.

Because, more often than not, I get into these arguments with people, who... [Laughter] This just happened two weeks ago, and I was at the back of the plane, so I couldn't really move [laughter] except jump out, where I could tell that this woman really didn't agree at all that this was a good thing for kids.

And she skirted around it, but she was very clear, but that she thought the best thing to do for these kids was to learn English and learn it fast and get going, and it's hard, when you live in an environment where there're a lot of people who feel that way, to believe in what you're doing.

It's hard to believe when you read headlines like "Hispanics Threatening National Security" to believe that dual language learning in young children is a good thing, so you really need to look deep down at what your beliefs are, or the beliefs of your colleagues are, and promote an attitude of additive bilingualism, because without that attitude these other kinds of things can't happen.

I also think -- and you're probably doing lots of these things already -- provide key services in the main home languages of your students. You may need to get parent volunteers who are bilingual who can provide some of these services, write some of this material for you in these other languages, work as translators with parents who visit the school and so on.

Call on older children, if you're working in a program where children range from three-to-five years of age, some of the five-year-olds may be quite bilingual. They can actually help you promoting both languages, even though you can't do it. Show an interest in the other languages, if you're monolingual. Use key phrases, learn greetings in the other languages, show children that you're open and you appreciate the other languages that they speak.

I think there're a host of things that you could probably do that will create an environment where children feel that speaking their language and learning that language is a good thing. So the other thing that... I'm just going to end here is -- we could spend a whole day on these myths -- is that you really need a plan, you really need to decide how you're going to do this if you're going in the dual language route. How much time are you going to spend in each language? Who's going to use these two languages? What are you going to do in the languages?

As I said before, I think it's not simply the matter of using the non-English languages to socialize children; I think you also need to be creating opportunities in the program in order to stretch their language competencies to prepare them

for literacy later on, to prepare them for schooling later on.

I'm not saying turn the zero-to-five programs into school, but there's lots of things that you can do that are developmentally appropriate and fun with children, that will lay the foundations for later literacy and academic development. And I think you need a plan because you really need to really take a developmental perspective. What is appropriate for specific age groups? How are you going to build on what children are acquiring from two to three to four to five years of age?

If you don't plan it, it's probably not going to happen. Okay. And of course my take-home message is based on all of this that I've said, rather quickly I'm afraid, that kids can do it. It's very clear from the research evidence that dual language learning is not a problem for children. It really is a problem for us. So the real question I leave you with is, "Can we do it?" Thank you. [Strong applause]

Sharon Yandian: Thank you so much, Dr. Genesee. I can see the wheels are turning. Don't leave me, though, because we're going to have... I can see the wheels are turning as people thinking a lot about the myths, and I'll bet you do have a few questions. We do have about ten minutes or so just to get you warmed up, because in the 1919 room, if you can find it, this afternoon Fred will be doing a Q and A session where you can speak a little more informally around questions you have and answers he may have -- or not -- to your questions.

We have some mics in the audience and I encourage you not to be shy. If you have a question now to just kind of get us started, it would be great, if you could come up to the microphone, so that everyone could hear you. And I have a... can you walk to the microphone? There are several back there. Great. Wonderful, and here they are.

We're just going to do this for five or ten minutes, because we are going to do this a little bit later on. It's nice for the entire audience to have the opportunity, so thank you. Just share who you are, where you're from, and your question. Thank you.

Dr. Isabelle Barriere: So, first of all I wanted to thank Prof. Genesee for a wonderful talk. I'm Dr. Isabelle Barriere, and I am wearing three hats here today. So, I am a Director for Policy for Research and Education at Yeled V'Yalda, which serves 2000 children -- 70 percent for which the home language that's different from English, and between 15 and 20 different languages.

Okay, I'm also trying speech and language facilities and educators at Brooklyn College and a supervisor at CUNY Graduate Center. Okay, so, just one thing I wanted to say is, today we are three people coming from Brooklyn representing Yeled V'Yalda, the CEO who created Yeled V'Yalda, and the Professor of Eary Childhood Education at Brooklyn College who trains teachers, and I think that it is not fair to put the burden of addressing issues of dual language learners in Head Start on young Head Start Directors.

We train graduate students to be researchers. We need a new generation of researchers who are interpreters and are ready to work with communities. Three years ago, two and a half years ago, I didn't speak Yiddish, and it was very new for me to work with this community; however, even with the extremely complex set of variables, it is possible, so I think, as researcher, we have the responsibility to train a new generation of people who are able to work with communities, with Head Start Directors, so that we can have more and more findings and more answers to questions.

My second point... Dr. Genesee: I agree. Dr. Barriere: My second point is that we have to remember that you and I are both psycholinguists, and we are trained in psychology and linguistics, and we are very -- we focus on language. Okay. That's true, but in our program, out of 2,000 children, we have more than 20 percent who have some kind of learning issues. Okay.

These include children with autism, children with attention disorder, children with memory disorder, so this is a different issues -- and specific language impairment, and when my special education director comes to me, or the teachers come to me, and they want answers to the questions... I don't have answers to questions with respect to these issues. So I think, yes, we have to think about language, but we have to think about the whole child -- and the whole child in their community -- who may have a whole set of different issues, and not only language issues.

We need to think about working together. Dr. Genesee: Right and I agree. Sharon: Thank you so much for mentioning that point, because there are several workshops that address various disabilities other than language, that will address that. Thank you. I see... ah... ah...

John Fortunato: Hi my name is John Fortunato. I'm a Head Start teacher, and my class, it encompasses a community that is English and Spanish speakers in the same room. My question is: teaching alphabet names, teaching letter names and letter sounds to children whose alphabets have two different -- you know -- children in the same group whose alphabets have two different sets of sounds. That's my question.

Dr. Genesee: So you're saying that, "Which sounds and letters..." Well, you don't -- I'm sort of over-simplifying in a way -- I think what you want to do is engage kids in age-appropriate activities where letter-naming or rhyming and so on are appropriate, so, you could do this in both languages, there's no reason why the English speaking children can't be learning some of these Spanish rhymes and Spanish songs [Applause].

John: No, I agree with that part. But it's more with the letter names, so when you're with a Spanish-speaking child, the letter is (bay) -- when you're with an English-speaking child, the letter is (bee) -- you know, the name of the letter -- that's that issue.

Dr. Genesee: Well, it would really depend upon the model that you choose. If you have a program where you're actually aiming for both groups of kids to learn the other language, then you would want to structure the program so that there might be times when you're working in Spanish, and other times when you're working in English, so you would have to really work that out, and it depends a lot on the model.

If you're in a program where everything is in Spanish and that's possible, then you would do it just in Spanish, but there're alternatives. Again, there's no one way to do it -- it depends on what your model actual looked like or your program looked like. So I sound like I'm evading the question, but... and I think to the extent, that's the beauty of children, though. You don't have to designate certain times for teaching letters of the alphabet. You do these kinds of games which involve this kind of mental linguistic ability.

John: Okay. Thank you. Angel Passier: Good Morning. My name is Angel Passier, and I am a consultant in early childhood education, and I have a question about code-switching. I'm wondering if you could elaborate more about your thinking about code-switching for social communication, and code-switching for thinking and literacy.

Dr. Genesee: Code-mixing for communication and code-mixing for... Angel: Yes, would you see it differently -- code-switching for communication as opposed to code-switching for thinking and literacy? And for school literacy? Dr. Genesee: I'm still not getting the second half of the question, I'm sorry.

Angel: Okay, I'm sorry. The question is... relates to code-switching... Dr. Genesee: For social communication .... Angel: ...for social communication, but would you make a distinction between code-switching for social communication, and code-switching for language and literacy?

Dr. Genesee: ...language? Angel: ...literacy...[speaks in French: Oui, je pre, je pre change parler en francais ici...] [Laughter] Dr. Genesee: You're not from Quebec, are you? Angel: No I'm not. [Laughter]

Dr. Genesee: Well certainly I think that children should be allowed to code-mix for social communication reasons. That's just part of who they are. That's part of the environment. You don't want to stigmatize them for that.

I think when it comes to code-mixing for literacy and so on, there's growing reasons to think that you can actually use the bilingual mode of instruction -- literacy instruction -- that facilitates language development.

So in other words, a colleague of mine, Roy Lister, is working within a French-English environment where there's English-speaking and French-speaking children in the same environment, and they're working through various storybooks -- there's the English version of the book, and there's the French version of the book -- and the English and

the French teachers are taking turns reading one chapter in English and another chapter in French...

...then the kids are talking about it in English in the English time, and in French during the French time, but they're making comparisons across these languages, and the level of engagement that these children are demonstrating is phenomenal, and also the mental linguistic insights that they're showing are also phenomenal, so my own view... my view on this is changing.

I used to be one of these people who thought we should be keeping these languages as separate as possible, but I'm thinking that, we should in a strategic systematic way, be using both languages for literacy development. But we need to keep control of it, so that children are not using their stronger language and avoiding the weaker language, so you have to really structure it -- but young learners can easily be structured in those ways, but you have to know what it is you want to do, and why you want to do it.

Angel: Thank you. Yes. I was speaking about code-switching in the same sentence, but you answered my question.

Dr. Genesee: Well I think code-switching in the same sentence -- you accept what the child says, and then you have to assess, "Is the child saying this because the child doesn't know the other language -- the other words?" And so you try to build their vocabulary, and there may be certain times when you don't want them to code-mix, and there may be times when it is perfectly okay.

I think that, in general, we need to get away from this idea that it's a bad thing, but I think it actually provides lots of opportunity for teaching children about language. Angel: Thank you.

Iris Bradford: Good morning. My name is Iris Bradford, and I work with the Marin County Head Start program north of San Francisco. We have a very unique program in that we service -- approximately 95 percent of our population is Latino, so we're predominately Spanish speaking.

My question -- actually, I would like you to provide a little bit more information concerning, you said, "Avoid using or engaging in simultaneous translation," and I'm wondering if you could kind of provide a little more information as to why this is something we should avoid?

Dr. Genesee: Well, it traditionally was thought in early versions of bilingual education -- but I think sometimes people believe this is true for preschool-age children -- that, if the child speaks Spanish and you want them to also learn English, we should be translating back and forth so they get it, and also, so we get English in at the same time that Spanish is getting in.

But the problem is that, as soon -- it's not efficient for one thing, because you're saying the same thing twice. Children acquire comprehension skills in other languages very, very quickly. So, first of all, you don't need to do it. They probably will learn to understand it in each language, and secondly, there's an assumption with the simultaneous translation that the children are not capable of getting it, and so you create an environment where, I think, you're setting low expectations.

The best way for children to learn a language -- if they're predominately Spanish-speaking, and you want them to learn English, then set aside times or activities when you're going to use primarily English, maybe with some Spanish -- but don't compensate by doing it in Spanish at the same time. They'll get it. That's what I mean by not necessarily just translating.

Iris: [inaudible]

Dr. Genesee:Well, there is this problem that, if you engage in a lot of simultaneous translation, they will tune out the language that they don't know yet, and they'll just attend when you're using the language that they already know.

If you use both languages in some strategic way, as I indicated in this book-story thing, then they don't want to tune out when you're reading the next chapter in English because they want to hear what's going to happen, and the only

way they can figure out what's happening is if they pay attention. But if you say, "Oh, now's the English time, we're going to read the chapter in English" and then as you work through it, you're also giving it to them in Spanish, they're pretty cagey.

I mean, they're going to sit back and wait for you to give it to them in Spanish. Iris: Sure. Dr. Genesee:So they don't need it, and it's not efficient, and in my opinion it also entails a kind of attitude that they can't handle both languages.

Iris: Right. Right. Do you feel that it's beneficial to those, maybe other staff members or children in the classroom, whose first language is not, say, for instance, Spanish? Dr. Genesee: No! They should learn Spanish too. [Laughter] Iris: Okay, all right. [Laughter]

Dr. Genesee: Where do you draw the line? I mean... [Applause] Iris: Sure sure. Okay. Dr. Genesee: ...or you should work it out, you should work it out. I think, too, monolinguals could even work it out, but you need to sit down and talk about -- you need to prepare. "This is what I'm going to do in Spanish. I know you don't know Spanish but this is what I'm doing.

Are there things you could do in English that would support this?" But, no don't... I think we should -- if you've got an additive bilingual environment, then additive bilingualism is good for everybody. It doesn't mean that everybody's going to understand everything all the time. It just means they're not going to get upset when they don't understand it.

Iris: Okay, thank you very much. Dr. Genesee: Okay. [applause]

Sharisa: Hi, my name is Sharisa and I work at United Indians. I have a question about testing and screening. I've had several children that have a home language, and the test is not in their home language, and translators are not provided. There is a translation in the instructions, because that quote-unquote "makes the child comfortable," but the test is in English, and I have a visceral response not to have the children take that test because, to me, it seems like the results are irrelevant.

Dr. Genesee: These are children who are -- may be suspected of a learning difficulty? Sharisa: Yeah, and... or -- yeah, or just a basic screening too, because I think teachers observe and, you know, you know a lot of stuff, and by saying, "No, I'm not going to do this test," that would kind of make the testers bring in the home language. But I don't know if that's...

Dr. Genesee: In general, I think that people would agree -- either from a research point of view, but certainly a kind of clinical perspective -- that you really, as much as possible, should assess children in their home language as well as in English, because they may not be able to do something in English that makes them look like they're language-impaired or learning-impaired, but it may be that they simply haven't learned it yet in English.

And, if you look at their competencies in their home language, that's an additional source of information. Children who have language impairment have impairment in both languages. Children who are only having trouble in one language and not the other are not language-impaired, they just haven't learned that language, so you have to treat the whole child, as Sharon was pointing out -- to get the whole picture, you need to look at what they can do in both languages.

Now that may mean if your assessment people are monolingual English, they can't do it, but then maybe you need to have resources, resource people who know those other languages -- or at least the common ones, where they can do some even informal assessment with children in these other languages. The thing is that informal assessment can be very instructive, and you don't necessarily always have to use norm reference tests, because these norms as not appropriate for these children anyway.

So you really even need to use a norm reference test with a great deal of caution, and almost treat it almost in a more informal way, because it's not appropriate to use the norms, depending upon what you want to do with the test, it's -- for diagnostic purposes -- it's probably not appropriate to use the test norms to make a diagnosis of "impaired." Sharisa: Thank you.

Dr. Genesee: Apparently there's a whole session tomorrow morning on assessment. It's a plenary session.

Audience Member: Good morning, I work for the Migrant Head Start, our program includes infants, toddlers and preschoolers, and the children are with us for 12 hour days. So if we were designing an ideal model, would we do the program bilingually from -- including the babies and toddlers, or should we first focus on a foundation in the home language, and then when they're older, introduce English?

Dr. Genesee: Well, that's a little bit hard for me to pin down, because as I indicated in the beginning, you sort of also need to look at all of your resources, what the parents could live with, and so forth and so on. My personal bias is to support children in their home language initially, and then introduce English later on.

That's not to say that children couldn't do it with both languages from the beginning, but the thing is, minority languages are often -- you're sending a message home to the family, first of all, if you do it in English and Spanish, say for the first... right away. It may convey the message to parents that there needs to be this English piece with Spanish, and that may not give -- send the right message home.

But I also think that Spanish is not going to be supported as fully as English in the long run, and it's important to really provide that support in the very beginning, so that it can withstand some of the pressures that are going to come up later on.

Actually, from a program -- depending again on your personnel and so on, and program management point of view -- doing it in Spanish only is a whole lot easier too, because you're not juggling two languages -- but you can't do it in Spanish only if you don't have the personnel, and if you don't have the community support for it, but that's my personal bias. Audience Member: Thank you.

Sharon: We have time for two more questions. Then, please write your questions down and bring them to the session this afternoon. Thank you. Mary Debay: I'm Mary Debay from Brooklyn also. Dr. Genesee: So where are you? Mary: Brooklyn.

Dr. Genesee: Can you raise... Okay. Mary: I just want to clarify the difference between dual language learners and dual language programs. And I respect your work and thanks for a great presentation, but dual language programs really implies that all children are learning two languages, and I think it's important to remember, especially given the positives that come from learning dual language, there's many low-income children that only speak English.

Dr. Genesee: Right. Mary: And, the advantages of having children who speak English learn a second language has to be also a part of our mission in a place like Head Start, and we often... It's the little things we do -- like, I was looking at a slide, and it says "The home language helps to support English." Well, if the home language is English...?

Dr. Genesee: Right. Mary: It's the way we talk about it, and I've done this -- it's one of the few things that I never had -- parents in early childhood dual language programs who are English... speak English at home, who are anti-having to their children learn a second language -- and it seems the place that the families, in this arena, are far above the profession.

The families are demanding second languages, wanting second languages at all income levels, and programs are hesitating. I just wanted to throw that out there. Dr. Genesee: Yeah, I think that's a very good point. You could have dual language learners in a monolingual program, but you could still support them as dual language learners, but it would be in a different way than if they were in a dual language program.

Mary: And dual language program implies that you're supporting every child... Dr. Genesee: Right. Mary: ...English speakers learning a second language.

Dr. Genesee: Well, that's one of the community factors, if to the extent that you have a community where the English-speaking families want their children to learn another language. Then, yes, that will have -- that's, in my mind, ideal, but not all communities would have that kind of a population. Mary: Well, or they don't know that's an alternative

Dr. Genesee: Yes, right. So, that's right, so that's why I saying, researchers don't always have the questions, because I can't say to you, "Here's the ideal program" because the program has to sit well within its community and so on, but I think your points are very important. Mary: Thank you. Dr. Genesee: One more question I'm told.

Audience Member: Hi my name is [inaudible] and I'm a parent policy council for in New Mexico and I have a question. I help translate documents like applications, and even the Program Governance Handbook, and I have a dilemma. When I'm translating, I don't... if... should I use the correct words to translate the document, or should I use the words the community understands, even though it's wrong?

One example would be, like "bills" in Spanish -- it would say the correct way "services and in Spanglish would be "billes". So should I use "billes" -- the community can't understand what I'm saying -- or should I use "services" the correct way?

Dr. Genesee: Because it's the difference between using the standard version versus the local dialectal version -- yeah, you could use both. [Laughter] And this is really -- in the broader context, this is what dual language learning is about, and some of this -- not saying you would give this to the children, but you could, maybe -- for formal purposes, you have to use the standard form...

...but, there's reason why you couldn't either put in parentheses the other form, or present it as a kind of asterisk or something below. Audience Member: Thanks. Dr. Genesee: Interesting question. [Applause]

Audience Member: May I have one quick question, please? Mine's fairly short and brief. On page... I mean, on your slide 36 or 37, I'm intrigued by the icebergs... Dr. Genesee: Okay. Audience Member: ...and you cite Cummins, 2000. I could not find Cummins, 2000 in your bibliography. What is that publication, please?

Dr. Genesee:I think it might be the one called "Empowering Minority Language Students." If you google "Cummins" and then look for something that says 2000 -- but I think it's "Empowering Dual Language Learners".

Audience Member: Okay, all right. Thank you very much. Dr. Genesee: or "Minority Language Students"
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