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*Attaining Success for Second Language Learners*

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## **The Use of Interpreters**

As the U.S. population grows in cultural and linguistic diversity, the need for trained interpreters has increased significantly. More than 300 languages are spoken in the United States (Avery, 2001); providing interpreters for several different languages in multiple settings often is problematic. Traditionally, professional interpreters were employed for diplomatic interpretation or translation (interpreting written work), international justice, and/or international conferencing. Now, however, interpreters are needed in medical, educational, and community settings.

Speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and other educators will most often collaborate with interpreters in hospital or school settings, but few of them have been given any training in working with interpreters.

Research on interpreters and interpretation reveal it is extremely important to keep the process as sanitized and free from bias as possible and that this behooves all involved including family, community members and children 's educational outcomes. (Westby).

This is information about an interpreter training program that disseminates information about best practices available for the training of interpreters to support the culturally linguistically diverse communities.

## **Language Affects Access and Use**

### **INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS NEED TO UNDERSTAND RELATED TO WORK WITH INTERPRETERS.—vice versa.**

Proponents of traditional bilingual education say no one questions that learning English is a primary goal - but they don't want children's native languages forgotten in the process. It is important to compete in the global market right now, and the only way to do that is with kids who have embraced another language early on, says Pedro Ruíz, at one time the president of the National Association for Bilingual Education in Washington.

Most of the early claims about the failure of bilingual education had to do with the quality of the programs, he says, particularly when the challenge of finding qualified bilingual teachers often leads to questionable hiring decisions. In addition, there are issues which relate to the need for training in the area of interpreters...an interpreter, for there to be quality outcomes associated with their use, needs to be trained in educational interpretation specifically which is different than any other type of interpretation such as court. Much negative attention paid to bilingualism in part is a result of the fact that programs are not frequently implemented properly and additionally, teachers are not properly qualified as well as there exists a lack of administrative support provided for them. Some years ago, I conducted a field project as part of my licensing process to become a Certified and Licensed Bilingual Bicultural Speech Pathologist and looked into various bilingual education paradigms in a major city school system to see how it was understood and supported by school and teachers, and if it was properly implemented. What I found is that Spanish and English were used randomly during instruction by teachers and that the model and paradigm was not understood by teachers. Additionally, the resources needed for bilingual education programs were not supported by administrators. This of course has great implications for efficacy and outcomes. Add to this, the fact that many families, due to the poor record of bilingual education programs in general, resist placing their children in these programs or do not provide the necessary parental support needed to make the decent programs optimally successful. This resistance as well impacts overall success of the bilingual programs as well as educational outcomes. Throughout the years, I have worked with several families who possessed reservations regarding placement of their child into bilingual education based upon rumors they would hear regarding their neighbors' children failing or not learning English sufficiently. In reality, what was often discovered was actually a failure of the bilingual program itself and its implementation as well as a lack of adequate training for teachers. As an example here, training in second language acquisition is under-represented despite the need for it. To that end, this results in a decreased demand for authentic and true bilingual programs. Even dual language programs where both languages are honored and supported have been misunderstood and devalued when there is much misunderstanding among families as well as the general public.

On the topic of teachers, I have often found and discovered that a "bilingual" teacher is often only able to speak Spanish, or Turkish or a foreign language in need and demand but can not communicate adequately in English. It is important to understand that this is not a bilingual teacher if he or she can not speak a good model in English as well as the first language. We need to place a significant emphasis on the appropriate training of interpreters. There have been times when I needed to consult with a "bilingual" teacher of a child I was testing, only to find the teacher did speak Spanish or any other first language, corresponding to the child's primary home language with absolutely little to no English proficiency. This could and often does have educational implications for appropriate instruction and education for these children. Schools often do not or are unable to establish standards stringent enough to weed out a real bilingual professional versus one with minimal fluency in English relative to their first language. Or, the reverse can be true—a person may speak English without adequate fluency in the language they claim to speak. Remember, because an individual is married to someone who speaks another language does not in any way mean that the individual is as a result, via the association, capable of speaking competently in the target language. There have been several cases in which I have been involved where people seem to believe their association via marriage means that they must speak what their spouse does and as well. Please again remember the definition of the word bilingual as many people confuse its true meaning. Proficient or fluent is not the same as someone being bilingual. Also, merely speaking two languages does not equate to that person possessing the necessary skills sets one needs to play the role of a bilingual educator. Ideally, a bilingual educator needs to be schooled in how to use two languages to teach and support the needs of either dual or second language learners. A dual language learner is that child with a history of two languages from early in life whereas a second language learner is that child who learns one language after having mastered a first one. Bilingual is defined as the possession of near communicative competence in 2

languages- a bilingual brain has associated with it communication so fluent it appears to be native like in its sound and quality. A bilingual person does not have to “translate” from their mother tongue to the second language and the other way around. A truly bilingual individual can communicate in two languages without any hesitation or the need to plan first what needs to be said prior to speaking. Often, schools and local education agencies or other institutions are so interested in having a bilingual educator to serve culturally and linguistically different children that they may and often do accept a teacher speaking another language but who can speak little to no English. This, of course, is problematic for many reasons and clearly has implications for quality instruction. This is not always clearly understood on the part of administrations who often need guidance in how to choose and standardize a process to determine truly if an instructor or teacher is truly bilingual.

At the state level, standardization processes need to be implemented such where individuals would need to meet a certain criteria in terms of language proficiency at the very least to be able to call themselves bilingual teachers or bilingual specialists. This needs to pertain to all teachers as well as school based social workers and psychologists etc. Training in second language acquisition should, ideally accompany this proficiency testing as well. In this way, a standard of quality can be assured. The knowledge of second language acquisition is equally important as is one’s level of language proficiency. However, unfortunately, in many cases, it does not. One suggestion I have had in the past is that some type of standardization exam be mandated by individual states created by a governing body familiar with the necessary language skill sets that teachers will use in their settings. For example, when I took and passed a New York State proficiency exam years ago, I observed it to “weed” out those who were not truly linguistically qualified to work and interface with children for whom English is a second language. Unfortunately, there are many instances where cursory interviews conducted by a Spanish speaking secretary who may not be truly bilingual are used to determine whether a teacher or a specialist is Spanish speaking –this clearly does not tap the types of language skills needed to function with students within an academic setting. This illustrates again some of the misunderstandings and confusion that exist relating to bilingualism and second language acquisition. A basic misunderstanding includes the understanding of what bilingualism truly is and what it encompasses. A bilingual individual is not someone married to someone from Mexico or someone who is living in another country for a year. It also is not someone who he or she himself or herself is going through or has experienced a language loss. And who as a result may only basic communication skills in the target language. Interpreters are another subgroup of population who need this type of second language acquisition training as well as training in cultural competence.

A new topic deals with an issue that comes up frequently and is often asked by parents. What does an appropriate educational program look like for my bilingual child or for a child in the process of acquiring a second language? I will start out by saying what is inappropriate and generally is not correlated with the highest of educational outcomes. Various bodies of research have shown that without the understanding and acknowledgement of the child’s first language, education and academic success may and often is adversely impacted. The primary language and its maintenance and support is an item that is routinely mentioned in bilingual and second language literature to be of central importance in the education of second language children. Asking children to drop their home language can be and often is problematic as well. When an interpreter is properly trained to disseminate accurate information to parents, the positive aspects of home language can be reinforced. Parents who are linguistically and culturally diverse tend to feel validated when being able to interact with someone of the same cultural-language background. It can and often does affect their ability to maintain cultural and social ties with their home community and it can and typically does impact academics as well. Regardless, it is a common practice employed in schools by professionals who may lack the necessary training and often the materials and resources to address the cultural and linguistic diversity of a student.

**INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN A PILOT FOR A SELF-STUDY??? A NEW ONE ON THE USE OF INTERPRETERS IN PROGRESS, ANOTHER ALMOST READY TO PILOT.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT DEBORAH @[djcslp@sllc.org](mailto:djcslp@sllc.org) or BETH @ [mullerbeth@aol.com](mailto:mullerbeth@aol.com).**

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

SLLC's status as an [ASHA, AOTA and ACT 48](#) approved provider allows us to bring to you specialized, industry-leading speakers meeting high standards in the offering of topics including special education topics, bilingualism, and others relevant to second language learning. Our highly qualified speakers, often with national reputations, provide webinars and workshops to our diverse audience of educators.



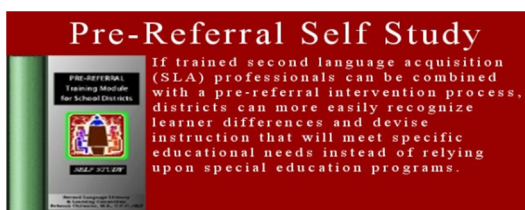
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### **Webinar - Differential Diagnosis: Language Difference vs. Disorder? Deborah J. Chitester, CCC/SLP.**

The objective of this webinar is to equip the audience with an understanding of how the differential diagnosis process works. And to further define non biased methods of assessment so important to be used in this arsenal.

**Wednesday, July 06, 2011 at 04:00PM**

### **Webinar - Writing Bilingual Speech/Educational Evaluations**

The Webinar session covers essential components of a bilingual speech language or educational evaluation. We will cover many of the essential sections of this report as well as when to do them. The ethnographic interview is discussed as well as its benefit over the home language survey in elicitation of key information. Other aspects of the report including language background and use are reviewed

**Thursday, July 07, 2011 at 06:00PM**

### **Webinar - Differential Diagnosis: Language Difference vs. Disorder? Deborah J. Chitester, CCC/SLP.**

The objective of this webinar is to equip the audience with an understanding of how the differential diagnosis process works. And to further define non biased methods of assessment so important to be used in this arsenal.

**Friday, July 08, 2011 at 02:00PM**

### **Webinar - Introducing Elementary School Students to Spanish –English Cognates José A. Montelongo, Ed.D.**

The purpose of this webinar is to acquaint educators with Spanish-English cognates. Cognates are English words that are very similar to words in Spanish

**Tuesday, July 12, 2011 at 06:00PM**

### **Webinar - Differential Diagnosis: Language Difference vs. Disorder? Deborah J. Chitester, CCC/SLP.**

The objective of this webinar is to equip the audience with an understanding of how the differential diagnosis process works. And to further define non biased methods of assessment so important to be used in this arsenal.

**Friday, July 15, 2011 at 02:00PM**

### **Webinar - Introducing Elementary School Students to Spanish –English Cognates José A. Montelongo, Ed.D.**

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The purpose of this webinar is to acquaint educators with Spanish-English cognates. Cognates are English words that are very similar to words in Spanish

**Monday, July 18, 2011 at 02:00PM**

**Webinar - Introducing Elementary School Students to Spanish –English Cognates José A. Montelongo, Ed.D.**

The purpose of this webinar is to acquaint educators with Spanish-English cognates. Cognates are English words that are very similar to words in Spanish

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**Tuesday, July 19, 2011 at 06:00PM**

**Webinar - Differential Diagnosis: Language Difference vs. Disorder? Deborah J. Chitester, CCC/SLP.**

The objective of this webinar is to equip the audience with an understanding of how the differential diagnosis process works. And to further define non biased methods of assessment so important to be used in this arsenal.

**Wednesday, July 20, 2011 at 04:00PM**

**Webinar - Writing Bilingual Speech/Educational Evaluations Deborah J. Chitester, CCC/SLP.**

The Webinar session covers essential components of a bilingual speech language or educational evaluation. We will cover many of the essential sections of this report as well as when to do them. The ethnographic interview is discussed as well as its benefit over the home language survey in elicitation of key information. Other aspects of the report including language background and use are reviewed

**Wednesday, July 25, 2011 at 04:00PM**

**Webinar - Writing Bilingual Speech/Educational Evaluations Deborah J. Chitester, CCC/SLP.**

The Webinar session covers essential components of a bilingual speech language or educational evaluation. We will cover many of the essential sections of this report as well as when to do them. The ethnographic interview is discussed as well as its benefit over the home language survey in elicitation of key information. Other aspects of the report including language background and use are reviewed

**Tuesday, July 26, 2011 at 02:00PM**

**Webinar - Introducing Elementary School Students to Spanish –English Cognates José A. Montelongo, Ed.D.**

The purpose of this webinar is to acquaint educators with Spanish-English cognates. Cognates are English words that are very similar to words in Spanish

**Friday, July 29, 2011 at 02:00PM**

**Webinar - Introducing Elementary School Students to Spanish –English Cognates José A. Montelongo, Ed.D.**

The purpose of this webinar is to acquaint educators with Spanish-English cognates. Cognates are English words that are very similar to words in Spanish

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### **About Our Organization...**

Deborah Jill Chitester, M.S.,CCC/SLP, Founder of SLLLC: received her Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology from Adelphi University in New York and was granted her Certificate of Clinical Competence (C.C.C) by the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA). She has 15+ years experience working with all age levels and with diverse populations, having received special certification by the State of New York as a Bilingual (English/ Spanish) Speech-Language Pathologist.

Deborah has worked with all age levels and all disabilities. Deborah is an advocate of “highest quality service provider” having given many speaking engagements at parent/special interest support, and educational association groups to educate parents and professionals regarding appropriate educational practices for second language learners.

**VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED FOR DEBORAH’S NON-PROFIT...MULTI-LANGUAGE KIDS  
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