

Dual Language Learners Celebration Week 2020

Dr. Deborah Bergeron: Hello, Head Start. I am so excited to join you for this special vlog. This is not just any ordinary vlog; this is our special DLL Celebration Week vlog, and now I'm here with my friend, Jennifer. And as you know, we always start off the vlog with a love note. So, Jennifer, share your love note.

Jennifer Amaya-Thompson: Thank you, Dr. B, good afternoon, everyone. I'm Jennifer Amaya-Thompson from the Office of Head Start. And my love note, as Dr. B always asks, my love note goes to four of the regions who are working with us to do the Celebration of Dual Language Learners. It's a community of practice. So, we have Region I, Region X, Region VIII, and Region XII, and they are working together very closely to have better understanding of dual language learners and how they can better support the grantees at the local level. And what strategies work, and what they can do to improve their work with dual language learners. I'm excited.

Deborah: Isn't it great that you've been able to pull different regions together who all have dual language learners, but probably with different issues, so they can share? I love it.

Jennifer: Absolutely, and you know one of those very specific pieces of the community of practice is that we have ECE specialist, grantee specialist, program specialist, so it's a whole collaborative approach, and people are working together to make a difference for dual language learners and their families.

Deborah: Isn't that great? It's exciting. Love it! Very good, okay, so we're gonna jump into our topic. As you know, it's "Spring into Practice." This is the DLL Celebration Week, and it is February 18 through the 21. Not really sure when you're watching this vlog, but it should be around that time, so we're ready for you guys to jump in. And Jennifer's going to tell you a little bit about this year.

Jennifer: Absolutely. So, last year, just a little recap, last year Dr. B and I did our first Annual Celebration for Dual Language Learners, and we had the opportunity to share with many of your social media messages. We did the celebration of MyPeers. And we also sent you that exciting book that Dr. B has in the top. Yes, the Ready, Set, Read to celebrate dual language learners. And he was so excited Dr. B because, I don't know if you might remember, but one of my special resources was the DLL, Dual Language Learners, Program Assessment Tool. And I check with my colleagues for the Head Start Information and Communication Center. And they told me that we have over 12,000 viewers who went to access that resource to better support dual language learners.

Deborah: That is fantastic.

Jennifer: Imagine that. Yes, and then Dr. B, for the whole approach for the Dual Language Learners Celebration Week we have over 200,000 people.

Deborah: Isn't that amazing.

Jennifer: That will reach out, too. Yes!

Deborah: That is a great, great, reach.

Jennifer: It was a really great celebration, yes.

Deborah: Wow. So, we have high expectations this year, guys.

Jennifer: Yes, we do.

Deborah: The bar has been raised, and you may or may not be aware but over a third of our children are DLL.

Jennifer: Yes. And that means that they speak over 140 languages.

Deborah: Oh my gosh.

Jennifer: Can you imagine that? So, every day when a child comes into our Head Start program we have staff ready to meet the needs of our dual language learner children.

Deborah: And it's such a challenge, but it's one that I know when I meet folks who work in this area they are so passionate about what they're doing. So, despite the challenge and maybe some of the hurdles, it's done with such love and caring that it's just such a beautiful thing to watch. Well, let's not waste any time. Let's "Spring" into action, Jennifer.

Jennifer: [Laughter] That is right, that is right. So, one of the pieces that I wanted to say because of the work that we did last year, and we are connecting, we went from awareness to action. So, what it means for us is that this year we wanted to concentrate on professional development support activities for our staff and our early care education programs. So, what we did is that we are going to be releasing, during the week of February 18 to the 21, a set of micro-learning courses for professional development, that are going to be in the Individualized Professional Development Portfolios in the ECLKC. Which means that we have the opportunities for all of the staff to access the specific strategies, videos, resources, to support dual language learners. So, it is really exciting.

Deborah: So, even if I'm not a dual language learner teacher, let's say, I just work in—in a place where there might be some dual language. I could take one of those and just become more sensitive. Ah. Wonderful.

Jennifer: Absolutely. Absolutely, absolutely. And you know, you have always dealt with that. We have to pay attention to what the field is telling us, to be responsive to their needs. And what we learned throughout the year, was that one of the most specific areas of support of the field need was to really address the intentionality and the understanding of what were the needs of dual language learners. So, for staff to do their own examination of their awareness of what it means to be a dual language learner and how do we better connect with families. So, all these areas are integrated into the micro-learning courses. And we are really excited because what it means is that anybody can access them.

Deborah: That's fantastic. So, be on the lookout for that. Is there any more action that you see?

Jennifer: Yes, what we are also hoping to do is through MyPeers. We have our micro-courses that are going to be announced, released, as well. We have the other micro-courses in MyPeers. The other communities in MyPeers are going to be highlighting the micro-courses, they have specific activities that are going to be supporting the release of the courses

themselves. And we also have our National Center for Training and Technical Assistance that are going to be leading activities during that week, as well.

Deborah: So, if I haven't already joined the MyPeers group, it would be a good time to do it.

Jennifer: It would be a great time to do it.

Deborah: What is it? The CLRP.

Jennifer: Yes, the CLRP. The Community of Learning Practices for Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices. Yes!

Deborah: So, if you haven't already joined, join. And then you'll get all the latest scoop. But is there—Are there any other action steps?

Jennifer: Let me see. There is social media. So, we have social media.

Deborah: Oh, you know I love Twitter.

Jennifer: Yes, you do. So, social media, as Dr. B says, we have to make—we got to used to it. Right? So, we have the hashtag #BrilliantDualLanguageLearners and we have some Facebook messages that are also going into the Office of Head Start.

Deborah: So, be on the lookout. Jennifer and I will take a picture and we will launch the first hashtag #BrilliantDualLanguageLearners post for this year. We got to get that out there.

Jennifer: Yes. Yeah, we're going to do that together.

Deborah: That's a lot of action.

[Laughter]

Jennifer: There's a lot happening but it's so valuable for the work that we do together. Dr. B, I wanted to thank you for all the support that you have provided us, and for the center, the National Center of Development, Teaching, and Learning for leading this great effort.

Deborah: They are. They've done a great job. My format always ends with, "In case you didn't know." And so, here's your "In case you didn't know," this month. Did you know there's an app for that?

Jennifer: And here's the app, Dr. B.

Deborah: There we go. So, we've got the ready DLL app. It's equipped with a beautiful little llama wearing sunglasses because nothing says DLL like a llama wearing sunglasses. [Laughter] And this app does everything.

Jennifer: And it has four different languages.

Deborah: It's amazing!

Jennifer: So, we have this app in Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic, and one more language, Haitian Creole.

Deborah: Isn't that amazing?

Jennifer: It's a great resource to use, yes.

Deborah: So, if you haven't downloaded the app, do it now. You'll be directly connected, and then you can start to use this on a regular basis.

Jennifer: Absolutely, absolutely.

Deborah: And your teachers. Everybody.

Jennifer: Yes, and it has strategies, videos, resources connected to the ECLKC. It's just hands-on approach that you can utilize when you're going home. Not when you're driving.

Deborah: Wonderful. No, not while you're driving.

Jennifer: No, not while you're driving. But it's a great resource to have.

Deborah: So, there's so much going on. Enjoy DLL Celebration Week, February 18 to the 21. And remember, Head Start is access to the American Dream

Together: Go make dreams happen!

[Music]

Child: One. Two. Three!