

National Research Update on Practices That Support Dual Language Learners

Amelia Bachleda: Welcome, everybody, to this webinar, a National Research Update on Practices that Support Dual Language Learners from leading language experts, which is part of our series of webinars on the Planned Language Approach. We are so pleased to have you join us today. We know, I know there's a lot going on in our world and our communities, and I really wanted to thank you for being here and learning with us together.

My name is Amelia Bachleda from the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning, and I'm based at ILABS, the Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences, which was one of the leading infant research centers in the country. This webinar focuses on exploring the latest research and practices that support dual language learners and their families.

And today, I'm excited, and we're so lucky to be joined by two leading experts on research-based practices that support children who are dual language learners. Dr. Lisa Lopez is an associate professor at University of South Florida who studies educational and environmental supports for children who are dual language learners, and Dr. Sarah Garrity. She's an associate professor at San Diego State University, and her research focuses on teachers' beliefs about dual language learning.

We'll hear research updates from both Dr. Lopez and Garrity in just a few minutes, and at the end of the webinar, we'll also hear from my colleague at the National Center for Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning, Deborah Mazzeo, who is at the Cultural and Linguistics Practices Corner. She's going to tell us about several new and existing resources to support our work.

Today, we're going to be talking about the latest research on practices to support children who are dual language learners and their families. After this webinar, you'll be able to identify how the latest research on supporting children who are dual language learners can be translated into practice and next strategies to support dual language learners to the Planned Language Approach and the Dual Language Learners Assessment, and we're going to explore resources based on the latest research to support best practice.

OK, so let's get started. As we begin, we really want to make sure that we're on the same page, and I wanted to start off with the Office of Head Start's definition of a child who is a dual language learner. So, you'll see it here on the screen: "A dual language learner means a child who is acquiring two or more languages at the same time or a child who is learning a second language while continuing to develop their first language.

The term "dual language learner" may encompass or overlap substantially with other terms that are frequently used, such as bilingual, for example, English language learner, (ELL), Limited English Proficient, English learner and children who speak a Language Other Than English." We also wanted to take a moment to really situation this webinar in the context of the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

You're likely familiar with the regulations outlined in part 1302, Subpart C, Education and Child Development. The Head Start Program Performance Standards indicate that for dual language learner, a program must recognize bilingualism and biliteracy as strengths and implement research-based teaching practices that support their development; so these practices must, for infants and toddlers, include teaching practices that focus on the development of the home language as well as experiences that expose the child to English.

For a preschool-aged dual language learner, including teaching practices that focus on both English language acquisition and continuing development of the home language, and if staff do not speak the home language of all children in the learning environment, including steps to support the development of home language for dual language learners, such as having culturally and linguistically appropriate materials available as well as working to identify volunteers who speak children's home language who can be trained to work in the classroom to support children's continued development of their home language. These practices are important to know about and reflect on because they are essential for supporting the development of children who are dual language learners.

The information that we're going to share with you today also covers the latest research-based practices and supports the implementation of the standards and how developing culturally and linguistically responsive learning environments set the foundation for a lifetime of learning. One other standard I wanted to mention is 1302.101, and this standard is the standard that requires programs to design and implement a program-wide coordinated approach that ensures the full and effective participation of children who are dual language learners and their family. The plan language approach is one of the many ways you are implementing a program-wide coordinated approach to support the children and families in your program.

As we go through this presentation, I invite you to keep these questions in mind, and here's some things for you to think about. How are we using sections of the Planned Language Approach and resources to create culturally and linguistically responsive learning environments to support children and families in your program, and what updates and new tools can you use to better support children who are dual language learner and their families? As we begin our conversation together, we want to take a moment to acknowledge the importance of this work. As professionals dedicated to improving the lives of children through our work, we know that every child has diverse strengths rooted in their family's culture, background, language and beliefs.

By supporting home or tribal language development, programs not only help children build strong language skills but also build their own unique strengths across developmental domains. While we all know the importance of supporting children's home and tribal language development, research continues to evolve, best practices are updated and all programs have both strengths and opportunities for improvement. In an effort to support the work of early Head Start and Head Start programs across the country, the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning hosted an expert panel work group in May of 2019, so about a year ago, to discuss the latest science on supporting children who are dual language learners.

The main goal here was to explore implications of the latest research for children who are dual language learner for Head Start, and that includes teachers and supporting families. The meeting focused on framing research to support continuous quality improvement and program implementation strategies that enhance the learning of children who are dual language learners.

The meeting brought together representatives from Head Start regions around the country, researchers who work to better understand how children learn more than one language and how to support them, regional training and technical assistance staff as well as federal staff from the Office of Head Start and representatives from other National Centers. The day was designed to support conversation and dialogue between program representatives, researchers including our guest experts on today's webinar, Dr. Sarah Garrity and Lisa Lopez, and federal partners. As a result of the meeting, NCECDTL has developed a series of resources and products that include the latest research and recommendations from researchers and programs across the country. It was really a collaborative day. We'll share those resources at the end of this webinar, but first, I want to take a minute to share three key takeaways from the meeting. It was a really rich meeting, and there was so much shared, but here are the three items that really rose to the top for us.

So, the first takeaway that we wanted to share with you is the importance of intentional language support. Young children can easily learn more than one language, but they need adult support. Young children, they're amazing language learners. Their brains are built to learn language, but they can't do it alone. They need the support of adults to help structure and nurture their learning, and this support really requires dedicated planning time, staff expertise and carefully built educational and environmental supports. So, for example, it really is important to dedicate time to planning and teaching two or more languages, making time in the schedule for that planning time. It's also important to look at your schedule or curriculum and prioritize small group and one-on-one time to maximize those back-and-forth exchanges and conversations that we know are what help children who are dual language learners learn. We'll talk a little bit more about that later.

And of course, use educational practices that celebrate children who are dual language learner by celebrating a welcoming environment that incorporates children's home languages and cultures. Our second takeaway is to embody culturally and linguistically responsive practice, so what's that mean? We all know that children learn best in environments where they feel comfortable, accepted and safe, and our actions and words signal who is welcome and who is an outsider.

As adults who work with children who are dual language learners, it's really important to adapt and change environments to make them more comfortable for each child. We can support creating, welcoming and supportive learning environments through a variety of important practices, so for example, a really important way to do this is to examine our own personal beliefs and understandings, especially around language.

It's important to recognize how our own culture and beliefs shape our day-to-day behaviors, language and environment. Our beliefs affect how we think about ourselves and others and how we act, and we're going to talk a little bit more about that later, too. We also need to

reflect on our own actions in the learning environment. Children are always watching and learning from all of us, and it's important that everyone in the program works together to create a welcoming learning environment, and of course it's essential to actively work to understand families' beliefs, backgrounds and cultures, which takes us to our third takeaway, which is to build partnerships with families.

Children learn best when they can connect what they are learning at home to what they are learning away from home. Partnering with families is the only way to learn about each child's background, strengths and interests. Research indicates that family engagement supports key school readiness skills, including early literacy and social skills. To build partnerships with families, it's important to work to understand each family's relationship with their home or tribal language and their goals for their children's language development. It's also critical to communicate the value of bilingualism to parents and families in a culturally responsive manner and to establish a bidirectional channel of communication between the learning environment and the home.

We covered so much in our meeting last night together, but these key takeaways, the importance of being intentional and planful about supporting dual language development, the need to critically evaluate our own personal beliefs and behaviors and make changes to better serve children who are dual language learners and the real power of building partnerships with families rose to the top. So, today, we are so lucky to be joined by two of the experts who contributed to the conversation in May, Dr. Lisa Lopez and Dr. Sarah Garrity. We invited them here to share with you some of their latest research on practices to support children who are dual language learners.

So, we'll hear more from Dr. Lopez in a moment, but first we're going to hear from Sarah Garrity, an associate professor at San Diego State University, and her research focuses on teacher beliefs about dual language learning. Welcome, Dr. Garrity.

Sarah Garrity: Hi, thank you for having me. I'm excited to be here.

Amelia: We're so excited to have you.

Sarah: Oh, good. So, I thought I'd start out by talking a little bit about why do I even care about teacher beliefs, and you can see here is a picture of me. I don't know if you can tell what decade it is, but it's the 1990s, and I was a Head Start teacher, and I moved to California from the East Coast, and I was really surprised during a staff meeting when everybody started speaking in Spanish, and I'm not going to lie, I got a little judgmental. My feelings got hurt. I wasn't really sure how to handle it.

It was the first time that I was ever in this kind of environment, but thinking back to what you just said, Amelia, you know, I really got to know my families. I got to love the culture and community in my Head Start center, and I really started to change my own beliefs. Then I left Head Start for a little bit, and I went to work for an Early Reading First program. I was a literacy coach, and I always remember we had to do a lot of assessments on the children, and there was a particular assessment where I had to read a storybook to a little girl who spoke Spanish, and every time that she answered a question in English, I had to mark it... No, I'm sorry, that's wrong.

Every time she answered a question in Spanish, I had to mark it wrong even if her answer was right, and after about two or three pages, my heart kind of hurt, and I just said, "This isn't right because this little girl is showing me how competent she is and how smart she is, and that she can handle these multiple language in a much more sophisticated way than I could as a 30-something, 30-year-old adult." So, that was another kind of turning point in my belief system. Now, I'm at San Diego State. I really embrace the trans-border community that we work in. I'm going to talk a little bit about my dissertation research next that was done in Head Start classrooms.

So, when I was in school, I decided to study early language and literacy practices, and I said, "You know, I'm not really going to look at dual language learners because I don't really speak Spanish that well. It's just too complicated," and then I got into this center that I was working with, and I saw all the beautiful children and families who 98% of them spoke Spanish, and I felt really embarrassed about myself, and I said, "Of course I'm going to look at children who are dual languages learners," and I really needed to... felt like I needed to give a voice to their experience and to the experiences of the children and the teachers. So, what I found is that the teachers that I worked with had very different beliefs about the purpose of bilingualism and if bilingualism even belongs in school.

It was interesting because on paper, the teachers looked very similar. They were both Latina. They had both moved to San Diego from Tijuana; so they looked very similar, but when you walked into their classroom, they had very different approaches to how they did instruction for all children. So, one of the teachers, she said, "I believe in bilingualism. I'm going to do everything bilingually." She sang in Spanish. She sang in English. She talked in English. She talked in Spanish. You know, maybe she wasn't always intentional about it, but she had this wonderful vision of a pluralistic, multilingual society. And then, I would go into another classroom, and the teacher felt really strongly that this is the United States. The children need to learn English.

And even though she spoke Spanish, she really primarily spoke in English, and the only time that she spoke in Spanish, I wonder if you guys can guess when, is when the children were in trouble; so, they walked into an environment when the only time they heard their home language is when they were in trouble or their behavior was being corrected. And when I dug a little bit deeper, I realized that there was differences between the teachers. One of them had come to the United States as a child. One had come earlier. One had traveled around the world because her husband was in the military.

So, I really got interested in how beliefs are kind of grounded in how we were socialized as part of cultural communities. I mean, it really also made me think about Head Start and how, depending on teacher beliefs, you can walk into two classrooms and they could look really, really different.

So, then I decided to do another study where I wrote the beliefs of Head Start teachers about bilingualism, bilingual education and dual language development, and these were two fairly large Head Start programs in Southern California, and what I found was that even though this was a really diverse sample, I think when I looked at my raw data, I had participants from 23 different countries. Many of them were trilingual. Still, even given that diversity, 40%

somewhat strongly agreed that we live in the United States, so English should be the main language taught to children; so, this is kind of this ideological belief that we have in this country that can impact what teachers do in classrooms. I also did a similar study with my students at San Diego State, and I found similar results.

So, my two key messages are really that when we do professional development and teacher preparation, so what I do at San Diego State, we really need to think about kind of these systemic issues that drive our belief and look at the connection between race, language and power in education. I always remember when I got to San Diego State and I would send my students out to field experiences, and I would tell them, you know, when you go out, absolutely speak to the kids in their home language, and they would look at me with these big eyes, and they would say, "Dr. Garrity, really, I can speak to the kids in Spanish?" or, "I can speak to the kids in Farsi?" And I would say, "Absolutely," but I really remember that my students had grown up in this context in California where bilingual education was banned. And then, the second thing that I really take away from my research is the value of some of these resources that have been prepared for the Head Start program.

Again, because I know that you can walk in two classrooms and see things very differently based on the teacher belief, I think that the DLL PA is so important because it provides this framework where a Head Start program can look at all of the different systems and how they connect or maybe how they don't connect to support children who are dual language learners and their family. So, I think these are really great tools to provide evidence-based, concrete strategies that programs can use. And then, even more importantly, like I said, sometimes have discussions because I had a very set—set of beliefs when I began my journey, and now look at where I am today. So, I think having conversations is really important, and using these tools to do so can be really beneficial.

Then, the last thing that I want to talk about is some of the things we're doing here in California because we really are, I'm excited, taking a very system-based look at how to support dual language learners and families, so one of the things that we did is Proposition 58, which got rid of the ban on bilingual education here in California, which was kind of a very, very big deal. We also have a State Seal of Biliteracy, which I'm really excited about, and this can be given to high school students who show proficiency in English and another language. And I just think symbolically, it sends a really important message that we value bilingualism, we value multiculturalism, and it's a goal that you work towards and you can actually get this seal when you graduate from high school.

We also have our Preschool Learning Foundations Volume 1, and those are kind of our state standards. So, what I like about that is that standards for English language learners are right in the very first volume. They're not stuck in Volume 17 at the very end, but the state really recognizes that so many of our students in California speak a language other than English. And then, we also have a Preschool English Learners Guide, which gives strategies for teachers. First 5 California just funded a big pilot study to really look at what are programs in California doing well? How can we take what they're doing well and scale it up to other programs? One thing that I love about California is that we have a tobacco tax.

That's our First 5 money, that all the money for taxes on cigarettes goes to programs for children 0 to 5 and their families. So, then we also have lots of training that's going on across the state for early childhood educators so there's different models that are being used, but I think the state is really intentionally ...

Amelia talked about intentionality, and I think that we're really intentionally doing this multipronged approach to figure out what we can do and identify best practices to support dual language learners and their families, And a lot of this professional development has to do with addressing teacher beliefs and really getting them to reflect on how they were socialized, what they believe about language, and how they can really just best serve children and families, which is what it's all about. So, thank you all for taking the time to listen to me, and I'm going to advance to the next slide.

Amelia: Great, thank you so much, Dr. Garrity. I really appreciate this work around teachers' beliefs that you've brought up for us, you know, thinking about how the variability in all of our beliefs can really lead to variability in classroom practices and the importance of being intentional doing professional benefit, really look at those and how we can improve classroom practice, and if any of you have questions for Dr. Garrity, please feel free to enter those into the Q and A. We'll have some time to get to those in a few minutes. OK, so now I'd like to introduce our next guest, Dr. Lisa Lopez. She's an associate professor at the University of South Florida, and her research focuses on educational and environmental supports for children who are dual language learner. Welcome, Dr. Lopez.

Lisa Lopez: Thank you, Amelia, and thank you for having me on this webinar. I'm really excited to be here. I grew up being bilingual and taught by my grandparents. And so, I'm very interested in what normal development looks like for children who are learning two languages. Latino children particularly is the work I ... is my population of interest, but dual language learners in general are a unique group, and so we ... In my research with my collaborators, we're really focusing on identifying what is normal development in terms of children's skills as well as understanding what's going on in classrooms, particularly Head Start classrooms, and in the home of the language learners that really help foster the positive development of dual language learners.

So, I've been working with Head Start programs for over 20 years across multiple states, really trying to understand the population that Head Start serves, develop assessments to better understand how children are developing and evaluating curriculum for dual language learners, as well as participant in professional development and webinar series like these to help teachers better serve our dual language learner population.

So, in addition to the research I'm going to talk a little bit about today that we discussed last May, I also wanted to mention that I've been working with colleagues on exploring a little bit more about the heterogeneity of Latino dual language learners in particular, looking specifically at children here in Florida, and what we've found is that there is a lot of heterogeneity. You know, we can really see that there's four groups of dual language learners emerging, and this is important when we're thinking about the kind of language approach and how we're going to meet the needs of the dual language learners in our classroom.

So, we're finding that we have dual language learners who may come from Spanish-speaking homes but have really good English skills, and so we need to keep that in mind that they are English-dominant, even though they do have some Spanish background skills. We have other children who, if you only looked at their English, you'd think that they may be struggling, but when you look at their home language, they're actually doing really, really well, and so all they need is a little extra support in English in order to be successful in both languages.

We're finding a third group who are actually doing really well in both languages, both in English and Spanish, and that's partly due to some of the decisions that have been made both at home and in the classroom with regard to introducing language to these children, and we'll talk a little bit more about that, and then there's a group, about 10 to 12% of children who are having struggles with both languages, and these are your children who have language impairment. We're finding some issues around working memory with these children as well. And so, we need to be thinking about these children not as having a concern because they are bilingual or dual language learners, but because they do have some sort of impairment that needs to be addressed, but this is a really small group of children, about 10%, and so they're not our usual population.

The majority of the population are actually not really at risk. They're doing really, really well as long as you're looking at their development in each of their languages and really get a sense of what they can and cannot do and providing supports for them. So, what I wanted to talk a little bit today in terms of my research and in my partnership with local Head Start sites is the work I've been doing really ethnographically inside Head Start classrooms. So, I've been spending a lot of time in classrooms that serve dual language learners, and I've been using this tool called the Language Interaction Snapshot that's a researcher-developed tool that really captures the language that's used in classrooms by the teachers and the children. So, one of the most important findings that's come from these observations is that children need to really be involved in more conversations and more discourse throughout the day.

Discourse means that there's conversations happening, right, so there's questions being asked. There's conversations between the teacher and the children. There's conversations within the child groups. And so, we're finding that there's not a lot of this happening in the classroom. We've heard for many, many years that children learn language best by hearing language, so we think we need to be talking a lot to the children.

So, what we're finding out that children learn even more conversation ... more language by engaging in conversation with their teachers and peers. Engaging in conversations helps the children to practice using language. It helps them figure out how language works and lets them obtain feedback on language usage, so how do you use the language, and it builds on the language that they might already have, and so by engaging in conversation, we can really get a sense of where children are in terms of their language development and build on that. Colleagues of mine, David Dickinson and others have talked about the "Strive for Five;" so having five turn takes with the child really helps you help the child to build language.

And we're finding that the more that these conversations are happening, these sustained conversations, five interactions on the same topic, the more that these are occurring, the better our dual language learners' language and math skills are developing. So, whereas when a

teacher is doing all the talking, children do less well on math, we're finding that when there's conversations going on, it's really helping children to process information that they'll need in order to be successful in language literacy and math, and it's helping them to engage in more constructive learning and in a constructive learning process, and so it's really important to be having these conversations and not just talking to children all of the time.

So, the main finding is really that if we're doing all teacher-directed instruction, particularly dual language learners will have a ... we're seeing some negative relationships to math skills, and not only math, language, and language and math are correlated. We can talk a little bit more about that later if people have questions, but what was interesting to me was, when are these conversations happening, and when is all the talking going on by the teacher? So, we looked a little bit deeper into the data, and we're finding that most of the language interactions in the classroom are occurring during two different tasks or two parts of the day—during whole group or morning meeting, it's called different things at different times, carpet time, and then during center or free choice, again, when children get to go out and explore different centers, and they have their free time.

So, if you want to guess what's going on during each of these times in terms of language, what we're finding is that the whole group time is when it's mostly teacher-directed talk, so there's limited interactions, limited discourse with the students; so the teachers are doing almost all of the talking, and all of this talking is mostly in English, even when the teacher speaks Spanish and when the children in the classroom speak Spanish, so teachers speaking in English to children who may or may not have the English skills to be able to comprehend what she's saying, and there's very limited opportunities for the children to talk; so the teacher is talking; the students are expected to be listening, and most of the talk that he or she is doing is in English, and the students oftentimes have trouble with listening comprehension in English; so what happens? Well, we're seeing that DLL children are usually out of the whole group, sitting in the back, not understanding what is being said, getting into trouble, and so it's not a great time for language interactions for DLL students.

And so, what we're also finding in these Head Start classrooms is that the other times the children are talking that are actually talking is center/free choice, and that's student-led. So, we have full-group time when the teachers are doing all of the talking, and center/free choice when the children are doing all of the talking, and we do see some sustained conversations during a free choice, but it's between the children, so there's conversations going on.

And this is a great opportunity for teachers to come in and also have conversations with the children and engage them in more talk around the topics that the children are playing around, so it would be a great time for teachers to be able to come and engage the children in this type of discourse that we're seeing the children already engaging in with each other. So, based on these findings, there's really two key messages.

Teachers really need to start engaging dual language learners in more conversations. If you're engaging dual language learners in conversations, this will help them with developing their language and their math skills.

Conversations should be happening in...Sorry. I'm trying to figure out the system. I'm sorry. The conversations should be happening in the child's dominant language at the beginning of the year, so we should be having teachers that speak the child's language, and so conversations with the children should be expected to occur mostly in the child's home language towards the beginning of the year. And these conversations can then transition to being both in English and in the child's home language as people start developing more language skills in their home language skills in their home language and develop some confidence in speaking English, and then teachers can encourage and support children to begin speaking more English with the choice to use their home language as needed as the children are going through the academic year.

Second, you do see a lot of whole-language instruction, of whole-group instruction, and so it's important that we limit whole-group time for dual language learners. They're not getting much out of it. Their listening comprehension may not be strong, and so they really need to be getting small group instruction and one-on-one instruction similar to what Amelia was talking about earlier on. It's really important that teachers be working with dual language learners in their small groups, that they be focusing on their home language skills and introducing them to English language skills that relate to some of those home language skills that they're learning and slowly transition to English, teaching the children about vocabulary skills in English, giving them concrete examples about vocabulary and explicit vocabulary instruction in English during small group time and use the free choice/center time to engage DLLs in conversations and work on language learning in a very much more concrete way.

And so, that's what I have, and I'm happy to answer questions. I see a lot of questions have been coming up, so I'm happy to answer any audience questions as well that you all may have about any of this or expand on any of that.

Amelia: Wonderful. Thank you so much, Dr. Lopez. You know, I think these research findings about small-group time and also the importance of how this language support can impact not only children's language growth but math skills as well is really important to think about. I have two questions that we want to start off with before we get to audience questions, but before I do that, I did see one question come up that's specific to your research, Dr. Lopez. What's the age range of children that you're looking at?

Lisa: So, we've been working primarily in Head Start classes, so ages 3 to 5.

Amelia: 3 to 5? OK. Wonderful. Great. Thank you. OK, so before we get to some of the audience questions, there's some really good ones that I've seen. We wanted to specifically draw connections to two resources that can be particularly important for programs who are working with children who are dual language learners, and we've talked about both of them already—the planned language approach and the Dual Language Learners Program Assessment. So, Dr. Lopez, I'll start with you.

You talked a lot about language modeling and organizing learning experiences and classroom schedules to be beneficial for children who are dual language learners, and these are all important aspects of the planned language approach; so can you talk briefly about some key things that programs might think about as they consider the kinds of learning experiences that

are most important to children who are dual language learners? You mentioned some, but if you could expand on that, that would be great.

Lisa: Sure. Absolutely. So, I think it's important to really get a sense of who your dual language learners are in your classroom first; so, talking with parents, communicating with parents, which is a piece of your planned language approach, and really getting a sense of, what are the strengths of the children? What languages are they coming in with? What are some of the aspects of the culture that are so important that these children really need to see in the classroom so that they feel welcome?

Once children feel welcomed in the classroom, they're more open to learning, and so it's important that the child sees that their language, their culture is valued in the classroom, and once the teacher has spent some time doing that, then she can really open up to helping the children to become more bilingual and bicultural. And so, it's important that the teacher show that she knows some of the phrases in the child's home language, use the child's home language within the classroom by having the child be the expert in the home language that they have that ability to do that.

Remember, each child is a little bit different, so their personality might lead them to be a little bit more shy or not willing to share about their home language, but really giving the children the opportunity to speak and be engaged in their home language is important and then making those connections to English. So, it's important that the children are starting to learn English as well and so making sure that you can connect their home language to what's going on in English; so whether that be in small groups, through concrete ways, introducing vocabulary in English that attends to the vocabulary that the children have in their home language and really using as many concrete examples as you possibly can to help children really start understanding the vocabulary that they need in English while continuing to develop their home language because it's important.

We've seen in the research that as children develop more of their home language at this age, it's easier for them to acquire skills in English, so continuing to work on skills such as phonological awareness in the child's home language, building their comprehension skills in the child's home language will all help the children as they're acquiring English. So, being very intentional and explicit in what's being instructed on in English versus the home language and how those connections are going to be made is essential in helping children be able to make that transition.

Amelia: Wonderful. Thank you so much. You touched on so many rich things there, the importance of being really intentional, of making those connections between a child's home language and English, and what you started with, I think, is so important, too, right? Really focusing on children's strengths, on their family's culture and creating this environment where children feel welcome and celebrated and that they want to join in and participate. Dr. Garrity, I have a question for you now.

So, we talked specifically about how important the Dual Language Learners Program Assessment is for how teachers plan classroom experiences, but I'm wondering, do you have

any additional suggestions for how programs can use the DLLPA? You know, the DLLPA is more than just classroom experiences, right? It's really this systems-wide tool. Can you speak to that?

Sarah: Yeah. You know, it's such a great question because I've found that when I sit down and talk with program people, they kind of get it, but when we start to talk about, well, how is Human Resources involved in that? So, when thinking about Human Resources, who do you hire? Who is going to be your best language models? How do you maybe intentionally think about deploying staff and putting staff in centers so that maybe each classroom has a strong language model in English, a strong language model in Spanish or whatever other language is served by your community? When you think about Human Resources, then, you also think about money, right? How is the fiscal aspect of the program going to support these kind of really best practices that we know?

And I find a lot of times that, you know, the education people are pretty much on board, and they understand, but when you bring in the other folks that are so integral to the system, this tool really, really helps to have those conversations, and I've had a Head Start chap that I've worked with before say, "Oh, wow, I never really thought about it like that before." And I also remember I was working with the director of a program down here in San Diego, and I walked into her office, and she had this whole whiteboard of how she strategically deployed her staff to make sure that she had the staff in the classrooms who were really going to be able to best reflect that cultural community and build on the strengths in that community, and that takes a lot of time. It takes a lot of intentionality, and I think it takes a lot of many different systems working together, and I think that's really what the DLLPA can help programs do.

Amelia: Wonderful. Yes. It's such a great tool for that, and again, I'm hearing these words like intentionality. It really takes time to plan these things out and to look at this system-wide, right? It's not just about the educational experiences in the classroom or during a home visit. It's really program-wide. OK. Thank you both so much, so now we have some time for some audience questions, so I'm going to get started with some of those, and to the audience out there, if you have more questions, please feel free to put them in the question and answer. We will try to get to as many questions as we can. OK, so one question that we got is, they're wondering if—"Can you please remind us how many languages a child can learn and at what age it's best for language learning?"

Sarah: You want to take that one?

Lisa: Who do you want? Yeah. I was going to say, do you want to let us know who it's directed to?

Amelia: Yeah, absolutely.

Lisa: I'm happy to answer that one.

Amelia: Yeah. Lisa, why don't you—Dr. Lopez, why don't you answer that one?

Lisa: Sure. So, children are capable of learning multiple languages. I know when you look at tribes in Africa, there's—I have students who are coming from African and Indian neighborhoods in Asia and Africa, and they're learning five, six, seven different languages all at the same time from the time that they're really young. I don't think there's a—There's not a

limit in terms of, "This is the number of languages I can learn." Obviously, as you learn new languages, there's a little bit of a cost involved, and your brain has the capacity, particularly at a young age, to learn new languages, so the earlier that you start being exposed to new languages, the better it is in terms of your brain's development of whether languages are being placed, so children who are learning languages from the time they're born, their brain has a capacity to learn multiple languages, and so the synapses are there and strengthening. The later you wait to learn languages, the more likely your brain puts them in different places, but so children really do have the capacity to learn multiple languages.

The cost is a little bit of vocabulary, so they have to learn vocabulary words in each of these different languages, but that's really the only cost that we're seeing. In terms of comprehension, in terms of many of the other aspects of language, it's really a strength, and there's a lot of cross-language skills that children can acquire in one language and use in the other language, and so the earlier the better, and in terms of the number of languages, there really hasn't been and research that I'm aware of that says that children can only learn a certain number of languages.

The research that I have seen says that children need to learn languages through interactions, not through screens and not through audio and video, so just putting a television show in Spanish on for the child isn't going to help them with learning language. There needs to be that personal connection and interaction going on for young children to learn language.

Amelia: Yeah. Absolutely. Yeah. So, what I'm hearing from you, and this, you know, checks out with what I've heard as well is that children are amazing language learners. They can learn many, many languages, and early is great. Children are really great at learning languages from birth, and the key piece there is that back-and-forth personal connection. Great. Thank you so much. Now, Dr. Garrity, I have a question for you, and this is one that I hear so often. It's, "What do you do when you have multiple students with different home languages in a classroom, and maybe they're not home languages that you share?"

Sarah: You know, I think that's a difficult question, but in a same sense, it's also kind of an easy question because all young children are curious. They want to discover. They want to make connections with people. They want to build relationships, and I think it's possible to do that even if maybe you don't have a shared language by just—There's some, you know, nonverbal ways that you can let children know that you care about them. You know, you can get down to their level. You can smile. You can touch. You can hug them if they want, if they feel comfortable with that. You know, children are hands-on concrete learners, so if you get some Play-Doh out, kids are going to play, and you can form a connection through play; so I think that in this case, a lot of those kind of best child development practices that we all know, they work with all children even in the absence of a shared language.

Amelia: Wonderful. Thank you. Yes. You can still have those back-and-forth interactions even if you don't share that child's home language, absolutely, and still facilitate the kinds of classroom interactions like Dr. Lopez talked about within a small group opportunity for lots of back-and-forth, and this question kind of relates a little bit, and I'll give this to you, Dr. Lopez. One person is wondering, what's the best way to do a read-aloud with multiple languages? Should you switch back and forth? What are the different options for a read-aloud in a classroom?

Lisa: So, this is a really good question, and you can do the read aloud in English, but what I would recommend is if you do speak the languages of the children, having small groups where you can do the read aloud in the child's language would be phenomenal because then that way, the child is getting the book, the vocabulary, the words in their home language as well as in English. If that's not an option, having children throughout the read-aloud engaging and thinking about experiences from their own culture that relates to that book and maybe even providing that in their own home languages, providing some key words in their home languages that relate to the book would also be a great way to engage the children in a conversation around the book, so remember, we don't want to do too much just talking at the children.

We want to engage them in back-and-forth conversation, so having small group read-alouds is a really successful way of doing this, and you can do that in individual languages, and then if not, just having children really be engaged and imparting their own knowledge of their home language and how some of these key concepts play out within their own culture and the vocabulary for their own languages.

Amelia: Yeah. Yeah. That is so important, and I have another question, too, that I think is related. Someone was wondering about code-switching, and I know that this comes up a lot more thinking about children who are dual language learners; and so I'll just direct this back to you again, Dr. Lopez. Can you talk a little bit about code-switching or code mixing and what that means for children who are learning more than one language?

Lisa: Sure. So, it used to be thought that when children code switch, it's because they were confused, but we're actually seeing that it's much more of an advanced skill; so there are certain words and ideas that children have in one language or another, and so the ability to be able to switch between languages is really showing their strengths in executive functioning and task switching. And there's a lot of research that's coming out now on the idea of trans-languaging, which is similar to code-switching; so being able to just fluidly go between two different languages, and we're finding a lot of benefits of using trans-languaging in the classroom, so instead of really focusing on one language or another, letting children use the languages that they know really helps them build a little bit more strength in terms of their use of language, in terms of their syntax, as well as provides them more comfort in being able to speak up because it used to be that children wouldn't speak up unless they knew how to say everything perfectly.

If you give them the opportunity to use code-switching or to use trans-languaging, then you're getting them to be more engaged in the classroom, right, so everything has to be in that one language. They might not speak up as quickly as they would if they can use some of their home language in engaging in a conversation; and so it will really build on their language skills.

Amelia: Great. Thank you so much. Yeah. I think that's so important to really take the strengths-based perspective, again, and creating these situations where children feel comfortable to speak up, to share and to see code-switching or code mixing. That's when children use, you know, two different languages in one sentence, and it's just a sign that they're learning more than one language, and they're flexible thinkers. They're putting together what they know to communicate with us. I think that is so important.

Now, there have been so many amazing questions, and we do not have time to get to all of them together, but we are going to do our best to send all of the individuals who've asked questions responses at the end of this webinar, and I want to take a minute to really thank you, Dr. Lopez, and you, Dr. Garrity, for your time and for sharing your expertise. We so appreciate it. It's been such a rich conversation, and I really appreciate it, and now I am going to turn it over to my colleague here, Deb Mazzeo, and she's going to take us through some of the resources that we have available to really help people implement some of the things that we've been talking about today.

Deb Mazzeo: Thanks so much, Amelia, and, wow, such great questions that have come in. So, for our last few minutes together, we'd like to highlight some resources that you can use in your work to support children who are dual language learners. Some of these are oldies but goodies, and others are fairly new, and we have a brand-new one that's going to be coming out soon that we're excited to share with you. As we go through these resources, I want to invite you to share your experiences, tips and tricks for using them in the ideas widget if you have a chance if you've used these before, so the first one is the Ready-DLL app which is available on the Apple and Android stores.

We invite you to download, share and rate it. You can use the app to build a culturally diverse learning environment, learn key words and phrases in Spanish, Mandarin, Arabic and Haitian Creole, access resources and see practices in action with some short, little video clips that are included in the app. You may be familiar with this new resource that was released just one month ago on the iPD or the individualized professional development portfolio. This is the DLL Celebration Week micro-learning course. You may have had the opportunity to try it out during DLL Celebration Week last month. From start to finish, the course takes about two hours, and it's divided into four different sections. Each interactive section includes examples and quizzes to test your knowledge and many, many related resources to support your work. Users can earn 0.2 CEUs for free after completing the course.

Next, we have a set of resources that is based on the latest research and practice presented at the DLL Expert Work Group, and it's a set of professional learning guides, and these will be coming out soon on the ECLKC, so be on the lookout. They are designed for program leaders including ed managers and cover key messages, guiding practices, as well as information on resources to support both a system-wide approach as well as program-specific practices. There are three briefs, one dedicated to each of the three key takeaways from the work group that you heard Amelia share earlier in the presentation. They are integrating culturally and linguistically responsive practices to support children who are dual language learners.

The second one is on intentional language support for children who are DLLs, and then the third one is on engaging the families of children who are DLLs, so be on the lookout. Next, we encourage you to join the CLRP, the Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Practices MyPeers Community! We know that you have many questions, and unfortunately, we weren't able to get to all of them; so we encourage you to keep this conversation going on this platform. It is totally free. It's a great place to share ideas, questions, and resources. You see the little icon there with the globe and the hands around it.

So, that'll help you to be able to find it more easily, and at the end of this webinar, the link to MyPeers will appear; so you can join if you're not already on the platform. What we'll plan to do is include the link to today's webinar on the platform probably tomorrow, so you can listen to the recording until it gets posted on the ECLKC, the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, because it does take some time before we get it posted on the ECLKC website.

Next here, we mentioned these two resources in the conversation with doctors Garrity and Lopez, but we wanted to remind you that the DLLPA and the PLA are two fantastic resources for your work, so the DLLPA is found in the Policies, Practices and Systems Section of a Planned Language Approach if you're familiar with that coordinated approach, and within the DLLPA, there are 10 sections that cover management systems and program service areas. It's a self-assessment that includes a series of questions that target culturally and linguistically responsive practices. Programs can use it to identify areas of strength and areas to improve by completing the self-assessment, and there are tons of resources for improving practices that are linked within the documents.

And finally, there's an entire section of the PLA pie that includes specific strategies to support DLLs. Many of these will be helpful when adults do not speak the language of the children in their programs, so we encourage you to visit this web page.

And before we close, I want to mention two upcoming webinars that will continue many of the themes we've touched on here today. The first is happening on May 21, sorry about that, and it's on "Implementing Responsive Care, Effective Teaching and an Organized Learning Environment for Children who Are DLL," and the second is on July 16, and it's on "Updating Classroom Language Models in a Planned Language Approach."

So, with that, I'd like to thank you all for joining us today. We just want to say thanks again and hope you have a lovely rest of your day. Thank you so much.