

# Young Language Learners

## Pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

Startalk

Day 6

# What do we know?

- Innate process
  - All children without cognitive impairment will learn a first language if they are exposed to it
  - They learn languages by exposure, interaction, and experimentation
  - Ability to learn languages is hard-wired in the human brain
  - If a child has consistent contact with more than one language from a very young age, that child will most likely develop some degree of competency in that second language

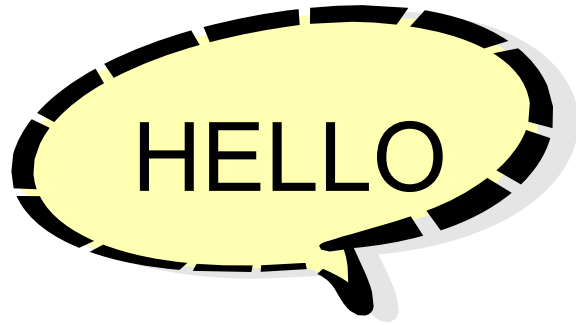
# School-based Language Programs

- Bilingual schools and classes
- Foreign Language Classes
- Afterschool Programs

# What does it mean to be bilingual?

- Bilingual can mean the ability to listen in two languages but speak in only one
- Bilingual can mean speaking two languages, but not being literate in them
- Bilingual can mean being fully capable in two languages
- Bilingual can mean using two different languages for very specific reasons

# Definitions of Bilingualism



same time

Simultaneous Bilingualism  
When a child learns two  
different languages at the

- Sequential or Successive Bilingualism-when a child has one language established before learning a second language



# Simultaneous Bilingualism

- Affected by Four Key factors
  - Caretakers' ability in one or more languages
  - Caretakers' actual use of language with the child
  - The language(s) that family members speak with a child
  - Language the child uses in the community

# Simultaneous Bilingualism/ Receptive Bilingualism

- Children have had high exposure to L2 throughout their lives but have not had cause/ opportunity to produce it. Children understand the L2, but opt to speak in English.
- Often the case of heritage learners



# Rapid Successive Bilingualism

- Second language is added after the first is well established
- Kids and adults can achieve high levels of proficiency, but pronunciation seems to suffer if the language is acquired after adolescence
- Critical Age for Language learning remains elusive

# Slow Successive Bilingualism

- Children have little exposure to L2, and have few opportunities to use it.

# Bilingualism and Language Delay

Learning two or more languages has NOT been found to be the cause of

- stuttering

- late speaking

- need of speech therapy

in any of the languages



**Ni hao.**

# What works to help language learners in school?

Creating an environment where:

- ~things take place in a routine and predictable way
- ~community members are happy and engaged
- ~linguistic risk-taking is encouraged
- ~communication is the focus
- ~wait time is granted



# Some age related issues to Language Learning

- Literacy Skills
- Pronunciation/ Accent
- Risk-Taking and Self-Consciousness
- Motivation

# Language Learning for Older Children

- Overcoming monolingual expectations
- Not just an academic exercise but a way to communicate with a different culture
- Ways to keep the language real:
  - Field trips
  - Real movies (not explicitly for language learning)
  - Youtube clips/songs
  - E-pals or penpals

# Critical Points

- For language acquisition to take place, children must have prolonged, consistent exposure.
- Students tolerance for ambiguity is an important language learning behavior
- Positive classroom environment can facilitate language acquisition

# Classroom Management

- Frustration and discouragement can lead to classroom disruption
- Clear classroom expectations should be made explicit
- Frequent class meetings to solidify/modify these expectations
- Positive Reinforcement for positive behavior
- Diffuse competition
- Use of the L1?

# References

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