

## Metalinguistics and Translanguaging: Language Development in Young Children

Panel Presentation, P3SD Conference

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### Background/Premises:

- children are born innately with language emergence pre-wired as part of their normal cognitive development, but they need caretakers to stimulate its advancement
- all children produce all sounds possible for all languages and filter their choices according to feedback from their caregivers
- healthy and robust acquisition of language requires meaningful interactions with caregivers all day
- most children in the world grow up in multilingual environments
- children can benefit from learning more than one language simultaneously, but will discern dominance or prestige of language from their environment
- academic language in any language develops best through wide experience and a focus on literacy
- metalinguistics empowers learners through more robust cognition
- dual language learners mitigate meaning through translanguaging, which can be cultivated through instruction

### Recommendations: Ages 0-5, Birth to PreSchool

- nurture multilingualism and high levels of academic language through interaction, experience and text
- play with language through rhymes, alliteration, chants, songs, questions and conversations
- encourage translanguaging by supporting children's native language use and cross-linguistic transfer
- engage caretakers to take joy in the presence of their children using the languages they know best
- advocate text literacy (e.g., noticing environmental print, producing family books, engendering a value on writing such as letters or reading together)
- nourish observations and respect for all languages

### Recommendations: Ages 6-8, Kinder through 2nd Grade

- all of the above +
- ascertain students' experience in concepts of print and a home culture of literacy
- assess the students' range of phonemes, graphemes, morphology, vocabulary and reading comprehension
- build metalinguistics and conceptualization of language explicitly
- grow literacy and foster multiliteracy (reading in more than one language)
- promote embracing of multilingualism

Contributions for high quality learning environments for young children from SDCOE (Jorge's work supports Kinder through 12th Grade teachers):

- academic and language development standards in Spanish
- diagnostic assessments in Spanish for young children
- new reading analyses designed specifically for children moving between languages
- teacher professional development on Spanish language arts and bridging (cross language transfer)