

CURRENT PARADIGMS IN ADDRESSING MULTILINGUALISM

THE US CONTEXT

Carol Scheffner Hammer, Ph.D.

TEACHERS COLLEGE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

MULTILINGUAL CHILDREN IN THE US

- Increasing numbers of bilingual children entering the US educational system
 - More than 11 million children are learning two languages
 - 30% of children in Head Start
- Over 400 languages spoken
 - Majority Spanish-speaking
 - 70% School Age
 - 80% Head Start
- Less than optimal academic outcomes
 - 75% of 4th graders below “basic” reading proficiency
 - More likely to drop out of school



CHALLENGES FACED BY BILINGUALS

- Language minority status
 - Differences b/w US, Canada & Europe
- Views of bilingualism
 - LEP → ESL → ELL → DLL
- Poverty & Spanish speakers
 - Immigration Policies
- Discrimination & Immigration Status
 - Parents less able to advocate
- Language Policies
 - English only - AZ, CA, CO, MA
 - Home language supported - Minnesota
- Educational quality

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

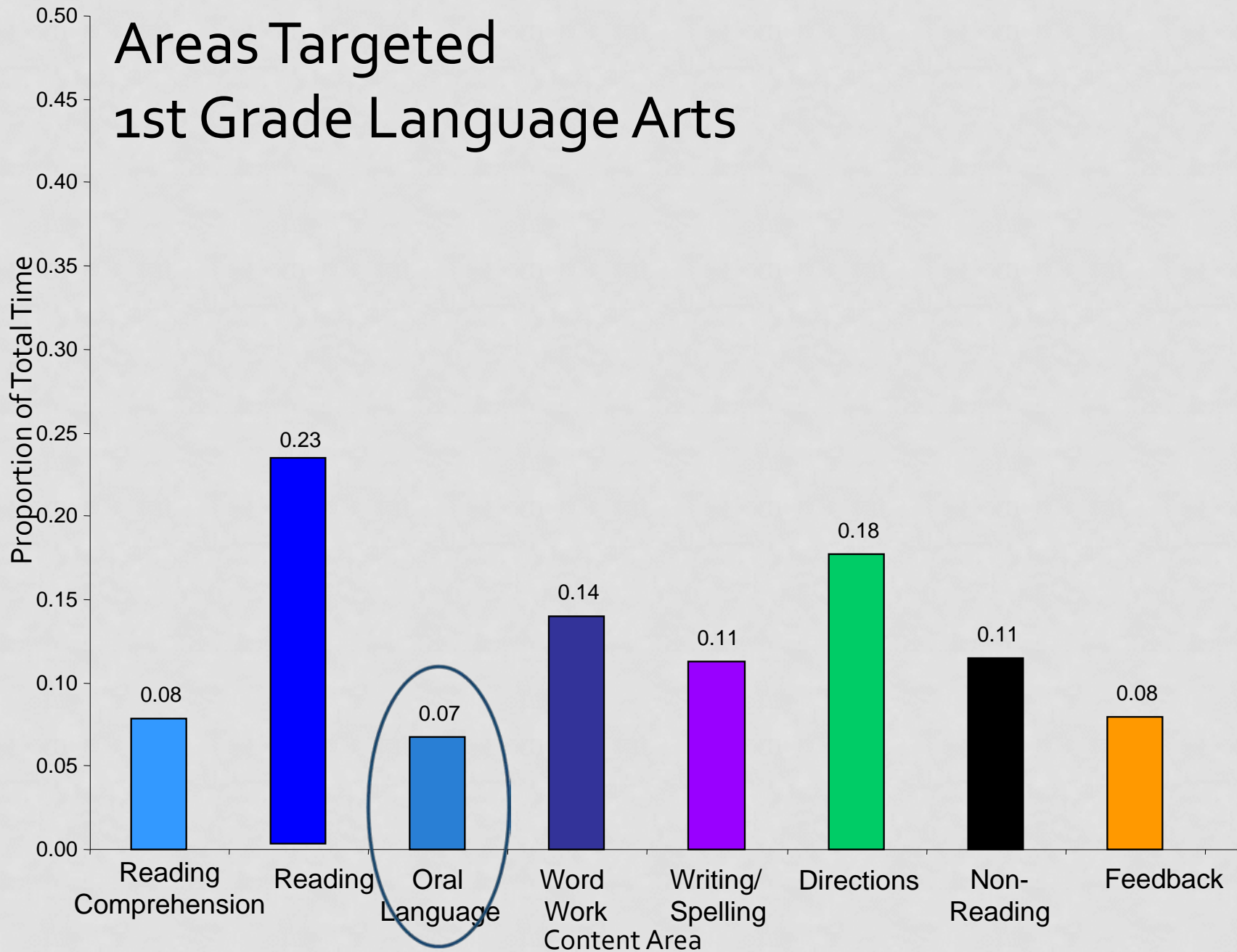
- Most bilingual preschoolers taught in English
 - 94% of teachers are monolingual
 - Use of home language can be discouraged
- Multiple languages in a classroom
- Mainstream culture sets the classroom context
 - Communication styles
 - Content of the curriculum
 - Background knowledge may differ
- Disconnect b/w preschool services and services for bilingual education

EDUCATIONAL QUALITY CONT'D

- Use of best practices for supporting bilinguals
 - Tools of the Mind Study
 - CLASS Scores – Average quality
 - ELLCO-DLL Scores – below basic quality
- Sustained conversations
 - 2% of time with teacher
- Amount of language support provided
 - Little time spend supporting development of language

Areas Targeted

1st Grade Language Arts



EDUCATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

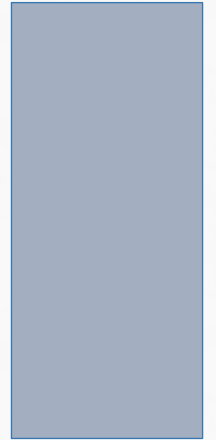
BEST PRACTICES

- Use appropriate assessment practices to identify children who are not proficient in L2
 - Definitions vary among states
 - Conversational vs. academic language
- Assess in home language to determine if there is language learning concern
- Provide high quality language instruction
 - Promote vocabulary & oral language abilities
 - Use open-ended questions
 - Engage in conversations
- Build on children's cultural & linguistic backgrounds
 - Funds of knowledge
 - El País

BEST PRACTICES CONT'D

- Teach in home language
 - Research: Use of L1
 - does not harm development of L2
 - promotes relationships b/w teachers & children
 - promotes social-emotional development
- Use knowledge of L1 to support development of L2
 - Transfer knowledge
 - Proposed Head Start Performance Standards
- Promote content knowledge in home language while children learn L2
- Give bilinguals time to catch up to monolinguals
 - Ideal – don't compare to monolinguals
 - Need time to catch up
 - 2-3 years conversational language
 - 5-7 years academic language

MODELS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION



PROGRAM TYPES

- Models
 - Immersion
 - Pull out ELL
 - Transitional – Early Exit
 - Developmental bilingual – Late Exit
 - Dual language – two way immersion
 - Attractive to Middle-SES parents
- No models when multiple languages

EVIDENCE

- Limited research on preschool programs
- School-age programs
 - Bilinguals in a specialized program
 - do better than or surpass children in English-immersion classrooms
 - Bilinguals do best in
 - Two-way/Dual language programs or Late-exit programs
 - Than in transitional bilingual education program (Lindholm-Leary & Borsato, 2006)
- More research is needed to identify
 - Effective practices when there are multiple languages
 - Which model works for which children

Thank you!

carol.hammer@tc.columbia.edu