



Chapter 2

Students: A Multilingual Perspective

Key Points

- Individual characteristics, such as linguistic, cultural and academic background, vary widely among the students who learn to read and write in Spanish and English in the United States. These characteristics have an impact on students' learning.
- Information about these characteristics should be available to teachers.
- Instruction is most effective when it is differentiated to reflect the linguistic, cultural, and academic backgrounds of the students.

Book Study Activity Objectives: Participants will:

Identify, compare and contrast the individual characteristics of students developing biliteracy.

Instructions for activities, and notes for book study leader:

Notes for book study leader:

- Copy the word sort on card stock
 - Cut out each cell of the word sort table.
 - Make sure there is a set for every two participants.
- Word sorts are most effective when done in groups of two, rather than in larger groups. Make sure partners are sitting next to each other, rather than facing each other, so that neither partner has to read the words upside down.
- Partnerships should work together to organize and match the descriptors to the appropriate student.
- More information on each of these students can be found on pp. 25-29 of *Teaching for Biliteracy*, by Beeman and Urow.
- Make sure to leave time at the end of the word sort to discuss:
 - How does each student benefit from biliteracy instruction?
 - What strengths does each student bring to the biliteracy classroom?
 - What will be the areas of need for each student?
 - How do these student profiles reflect or differ from the students in your classroom, school, or district?

Word Sort – Students: A Multilingual Perspective

Student	Carmen <i>First Grade</i>	Paulo <i>Second Grade</i>	Antonio <i>Fifth Grade</i>	Lucía <i>Seventh Grade</i>	Hannah <i>Third Grade</i>
Student's Cultural Background	Born in Mexico; new immigrant to the U.S. at 6 years of age; attended public school in rural Mexico.	Born in the U.S.; speaks Spanish in the home, English outside the home	Born in Mexico; new immigrant to U.S. at 10 years of age; attended private school in Mexico City	Born in the U.S.; prefers to use English	Born in the U.S.; Speaks only English in the home
Spanish Linguistic Resources:	Formal: Knows colors, letters, numbers, songs in Spanish. Informal: Spanish reflects regional use. For example, the use of many archaic expressions typical of rural Mexico like <i>ansina</i> for <i>así</i> and <i>naiden</i> for <i>nadie</i>	Formal: Uses formal Spanish for key content area words like <i>fracción</i>, <i>mayúscula</i>, <i>crisálida</i>. Informal: Language use reflects a bilingual context and U.S. Spanish: <i>troca</i>, <i>frizar</i>, <i>puchar</i>, <i>carpeta</i>, <i>barquear</i>, etc.	Formal: Grade-level vocabulary in content areas and Spanish literacy. Informal: Language use reflects urban Mexican Spanish (<i>sí</i>, <i>¿no?</i>), as well as Mexican-specific terms like <i>escuincle</i> and <i>fuchi</i> (words of Aztec origin meaning young person and dirty, respectively).	Formal: Little formal Spanish due to lack of instruction through the medium of Spanish. Informal: Language use reflects U.S. Spanish (<i>lonche</i>); archaic Spanish expressions; and regional Spanish of rural El Salvador	Formal: Uses formal Spanish for key content area words like <i>párrafo</i>, <i>personajes</i>, numbers. Informal: Spanish is more limited than English because of little exposure to informal Spanish since English is the language of the playground and informal peer-to-peer interactions.

Metalinguistic ("Bridging") Resources	Can identify words she knows in both English and Spanish, like some colors and school supplies; able to differentiate what is in English and what is in Spanish	Identifies language with person (speaks English with monolingual English speaking principal and Spanish with the bilingual teacher); linguistic creativity includes <i>bleediando</i> and other examples of U.S. Spanish.	Can use a bilingual dictionary; has independently identified cognates; clearly differentiates what is in English and what is in Spanish.	Can use a bilingual dictionary; clearly differentiates what is in English, what is in Spanish, and what is U.S. Spanish. Speaks U.S. Spanish with peers.	Can use a bilingual dictionary; has identified cognates; able to differentiate what is in English and what is in Spanish; creates cognates and other linguistic approximations: <i>desfrizado</i>
Linguistic Resources: Informal and Formal English	Formal: Names of school-related items. Informal: Language use reflects some playground English learned from peers, including names of popular games and toys.	Formal: Able to use key vocabulary and concepts in English through bridging: fraction, upper case letter, and chrysalis. Informal: Reflects playground English, community and regional English	Formal: Cognates help him with key content area vocabulary in English. Informal: Reflects some playground English and English terms from on-line and other media	Formal: Able to use key vocabulary and concepts in English – all formal education has been in English. Informal: Language use reflects regional and community English	Formal: Able to use key vocabulary and concepts in English through bridging: paragraph, character, numbers Informal: Language use reflects regional and community English

Academic Background	Attended Kindergarten in Mexico	Kindergarten through second grade bilingual education in the U.S.	Kindergarten through fourth grade in Mexico City private school	Kindergarten through sixth grade in monolingual English classrooms	Kindergarten through third grade in dual language classrooms
Parents' Linguistic, Cultural, & Academic Background	Parents born in rural Mexico; monolingual Spanish speakers with interrupted schooling	Parents born in rural Mexico; Spanish speakers with interrupted schooling; understand and speak some English	Parents born in Mexico City. Both parents are college graduates; both have some development in oral and written English	Parents born in El Salvador; Spanish speakers with interrupted schooling; understand and speak some English	Parents born in the U.S.; both parents are college educated monolingual English speakers
Bilingual Development	Sequential Bilingual	Simultaneous Bilingual	Sequential Bilingual	Simultaneous Bilingual	Sequential Bilingual