



GEM OF THE MONTH



Highlighting an exemplary intervention study



Effects of a Culturally Responsive Interactive Book-Reading Intervention on the Language Abilities of Preschool Dual Language Learners: A Pilot Study

Carol Scheffner Hammer & Brook Sawyer examined the effects of a book-reading intervention on the language abilities of Latino dual Language learners (DLLs). Eight culturally informed books, developed for the project, were used to support Latina mothers' usage of high quality language strategies. The study included 90 Latina Mothers and their children (43- 60 months) from an urban Head Start. The intervention group received bi-monthly home visits over 4 months to introduce the books and discuss interactive book reading strategies. Findings suggest children in the intervention group made greater gains in expressive language abilities than children in the control group. Additionally, 95% of the mothers reported reading the project's weekly book at least once, 87% of the mothers reported doing the associated book activity, and 65% of the mothers volunteered that the books allowed them to share aspects of their culture with their children.

Hammer, C. S., & Sawyer, B. (2016). Effects of a Culturally Responsive Interactive Book-Reading Intervention on the Language Abilities of Preschool Dual Language Learners: A Pilot Study. *NHSA Dialog*, 18(4), 189-212.

Advancing Knowledge to Bridge the Word Gap

We know language is a critical skill for children's future successes in school and life. However, few studies have examined book-reading interventions tailored for DLLs. This article adds to the literature and describes a feasible, culturally sensitive way to support children learning two languages, and to support families in advancing their child's vocabulary and language abilities. With more interventions devised for a wider range of populations, we may better ameliorate the Word Gap.

Meet the BWGRN Author

Carol Scheffner Hammer, Columbia University

Why did you do this study?

Carol: There is a great need for interventions that integrate families' cultures. Most interventions require families to adapt to the content rather than the content being developed for them. This project assisted mothers on how to support their children's language development in Spanish and English and enabled them to share their culture with their children.

How is this study informing your next steps in research?

Carol: Seeing the joy the mothers and children had reading the books and talking about their culture has reinforced my goal of developing and implementing culturally informed interventions.



Commentary by the Nominator

Anne Larson, Utah State University

This article is an exceptional example of community-based participatory research that integrates the families' culture, and provides valuable information about the use of interactive book reading in an understudied population, Latino DLLs. The article ensured the study population of interest had a say, in both the design of the intervention, and in the use and outcomes of the intervention books beyond the unique aspects incorporated by authors in the design of intervention materials. The authors also used a high-quality randomized control study – making the results of this study, even more reliable and important for the field as we learn more about the best ways to provide interventions in this under-represented group.