The *importance* of *dual language* assessment in early literacy

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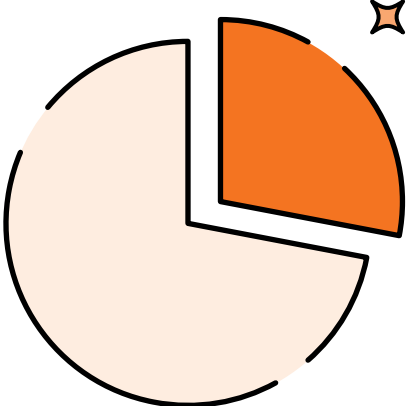## More than 1 in 4 elementary students are Latino/a.

The Latino/a population accounted for over half (52%) of the U.S. population growth between 2010–2019 and, as of 2019, there were nearly 60 million Latino/a-identified people in the United States (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020).

Over 10% of K–12 students are English Learners, and ¾ of them speak Spanish at home.

In 2018,
27%
of the approximately 51 million school-age children in the U.S. were Latino/a.

There are long-standing opportunity gaps between L1 Spanish-speaking students and L1 English-speaking students.

Due to long-standing social economic issues, students who come from primarily Spanish-speaking families demonstrate lower reading performance than their English-speaking counterparts. (National Academy of Science, Engineering, and Medicine [NASEM], 2017)

77%
of Latino/a students are likely not proficient readers by 4th grade (NAEP, 2019).

Assessing Spanish speakers in their home language is key to creating a level playing field.

A 2019 University of Oregon study that compared the results of PreK Spanish speakers who were assessed in their native language versus English found that:

while only

21%
were identified as needing Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention when assessed in Spanish.

63%
were identified as needing Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention when assessed in English

Assessments should reflect the differences between English and Spanish.

Although learning to read is the same process in English and Spanish, a high-quality assessment will account for the major differences between English and Spanish, and not simply provide a direct translation.

English	Spanish
44 phonemes	Between 22 and 24 phonemes
Phonemes represented orthographically by approximately 150 graphemes	Almost a one-to-one match to phonemes and graphemes
One of the most opaque alphabetic languages	One of the more transparent alphabetic languages

Amplify.

To identify and support struggling Spanish-speaking students early, research indicates that the following early literacy skills are critical to screen for:

Phonological awareness

Alphabetic understanding & decoding

Vocabulary

Comprehension

Fluency with connected text

Elements of a high-quality Spanish assessment

1 **Parity** with English solutions

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2 **Culturally responsive** content and word choice

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3 **Built on latest research** on how Spanish literacy is developed

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4 **Unified picture** of a student's biliteracy skills

Cross-linguistic transfer: Leveraging students' strengths in one language to build skills in the other language

A high-quality assessment should also provide student data that enables educators to support the transfer of a student's skills in one language to develop their skills in the other language.

Oral language, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, and reading comprehension skills measured in Spanish can aid in predicting reading skills and language growth in English (Atwill,et al., 2010; Baker et al., 2011; Jackson et al., 2014; Melby-Lervåg & Lervåg, 2011).

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The bottom line

There are long standing inequities when teaching Spanish-speaking students. It is critical that assessments recognize students' Spanish language proficiency and how it might impact performance on English literacy assessment and the instructional needs of multilingual students.

Hello!

¡Hola!

mCLASS Lectura is a K–6 universal screener assessment co-developed by Amplify and the Center on Teaching and Learning at the University of Oregon that addresses these needs. To learn more about the program, contact Amplify at mCLASS@amplify.com or (800)-823-1969.

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